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SONG OF THE LEDGER'S STEAM PRESSES.

BY CARLOS Z. RITCHTER.

As you gaze upon the river
  Beautifying many a clime,
Like the spirit-wreathing music
  Of some laurel'd poet's rhyme;
As you gaze upon the heaven
  Full of cloud-urns dropping rain,
Like a glorious benediction
  On the farmer's planted plain—
So gaze on us ever-rolling,
  Ever rolling, night and day,
With the Mind's majestic power,
  And the Steam-god's sleepless sway—
Hurling o'er your great Republic
  Half a million sheets that bear
Sweet Romance's shapes of wonder
  To the maiden waiting there;
Poesy's own sweetest cadence
  Through the heart entrancing rolled;
Wisdom's hard but useful iron;
  And Morality's pure gold—
Beautifying, fertilizing,
  Like the river and the cloud,
Rolling through a gladdened country—
  From the sky in blessing bowed!

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THE BRIDE OF AN EVENING.

A ROMANCE OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE ISLAND PRINCESS;" "THE DESERTED WIFE;" &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE TEMPTER.

> Mine enemy, when he chose his post,
>   Chose time, and place, and company
> To suit it; when he struck, at length,
> Mine honor, 'twas with all his strength.
>
> BROWNING.

Soon Ernest Heine left his new-made bride, and went over to see the magistrate and negotiate bail.

Honora and Godfrey also took a friendly leave of Agnes, and returned to their cell.

It was while the poor young creature yet remained alone, and bewildered with the strangeness of her position, that the cell was opened, and a visitor was ushered in by the warden, who immediately closed the door, and retired, leaving them together.

Agnes, who had been sitting upon the side of her cot, with her head drooped upon her hand, looked up, and, in terror and abhorrence, recognized her mortal enemy. She would have started up and called the retreating warden, but that her limbs and voice failed as she gazed upon the fatal countenance of her persecutor.

While her eyes were still magnetized, as it were, to his face, he drew the single chair before her, threw himself into it, and sitting at ease, with his hands resting upon his knees, stooped forward, looked steadily in her face, and said—

"Well, Agnes, have I made my words good? Are you in my power?"

"Remorseless sinner!" breathed the girl, in a fainting voice.

"No hard names, Agnes, if you please, for they may be returned with interest, you know. What if I were to repay you back in words, such as these," and he whispered—"*thief, felon, convict?* 'Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones,' it is said. But, fair one, I did not come hither to quarrel, but to compromise with you, if possible."

Agnes, white, cold, and trembling, started up to spring to her cell door to call assistance; but her tormentor quietly arose and stood in her way, fixing upon her a steady look, that seemed to paralyze her limbs, for she sank back into her seat.

"*Ah!*" said the visitor, as he saw this effect—"Agnes, I came here to save you, if you will consent to be saved!"

"To save me—Destroyer!" fell from the faltering lips of the victim.

"Yes! to *save* you!—if, as I said, you will be saved."

Shuddering she averted her head, and dropped her face into her hands.

"Agnes," he continued, reseating himself, advancing his lips close to her ear, and sinking his voice to a whisper—"Agnes, it will not be *easy* but it will be *possible* to free you from this charge upon which you are committed. Listen to me—consent to be mine, and I will say that, to-day, I have discovered the jewels were placed in your trunk through the mistake of a careless servant, who assisted you in packing, and so withdraw the prosecution. Say, Agnes, will you consent to these terms?"

"Serpent!—no!" replied the girl, shrinking from his contact.

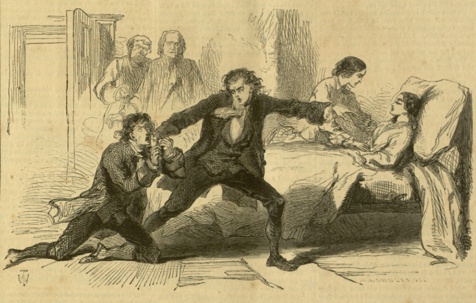
"No? Well, hear me, before you make that final; let me inform you what 'no' involves before you render it irrevocable. That 'no' involves the continuation of the prosecution; your case will go to trial; the positive evidence—the jewelry found in your possession will convict you; the value of the jewelry is six thousand dollars; it will send you to the State's prison for ten years of close confinement and hard labor! Do you hear that? Speak! do you hear that?"

Agnes shivered, but disdained to reply.

"Can you, a delicate girl, bear prison discipline?—a narrow cell, a straw mattrass, coarse food, hard labor, harsh usage, and the companionship only of felons and jailers, and all this for ten long years?"

Still she continued to shudder and be silent.

"And, above all, can you bear the irremediable DISGRACE? Look up, girl! Speak! for I will have a reply!"



DR. HENRY DRAGGED TO THE DEATH-BED OF HIS VICTIM.

Suddenly Agnes dropped her hands from before her pale and agonized face, and answered—

"No; I could not for a week endure the life you have exhibited to me; least of all could I bear the degradation."

"I know you could not, Agnes! and I only held it up before you *in terrorum*, as the pedagogues say. I only raised the storm to drive you into my sheltering arms. Judge how great must be my passion for you, Agnes, to carry me to such lengths for its gratification. Come—be mine," he said, attempting to draw her into his embrace; but she shrank shuddering away from him, exclaiming—

"Fool and blind! I said I could not for a week endure the life of indignities you held up before my mind!—think you I could bear for an *hour* the life of *sin* you offer me as my ransom? I added that least of all I could bear degradation—think you I could better bear to *deserve* it? Fool and blind! *I can die!*—that is what I meant!"

"Rash and perverse girl! Drive me from your side, and, drop by drop, to its uttermost dregs, shall you drink the cup of misery and disgrace prepared for you! You shall live and groan through hours, days, weeks, months, *years* of the life I have pictured! for no instruments of self-destruction will be left in your reach."

"Nor would I use them if they were. I feel in my breast symptoms of dying—*I should die!*"

"There is no necessity for that, foolish girl! I offer you a blissful alternative. Why should you prefer a prison to freedom, loathsome living to luxury, harsh driving to tender caresses, disgrace to respect, death to life?"

"Oh! I am most culpable to hear you so long. Away, sir! for even were you as honorable as you are base, I am a wife, and must not listen to you."

"A wife!" exclaimed the baffled suitor, in incredulous amazement.

"Yes, sir. One who has more strength of faith than I have, has this morning thrown his legal protection around me," said Agnes, in a firmer voice, gathering strength from the very thought of that royal-hearted friend who had so nobly drawn her, all wretched as she was, to the shelter of his bosom.

"A wife! ha, ha, ha! Well, your legal protector cannot shield you from the law, minion! None can save you from that, or from the State's prison that must follow, but myself! Remember!"

"Leave me, sir! or I shall rise and call assistance!" exclaimed Agnes, who had now recovered from the first effects of her terror; and, suiting the action to the word, she fled past her persecutor to the door, and called—

"Mrs. Dulanie! Mrs. Dulanie!"

Honora heard the cry, and flew to her aid; but just as she reached Agnes's cell, Doctor Henry came out, looking mild and mournful, as in a sorrowful voice he said—

"Well, young woman, since you utterly refuse to account for the presence of the pearls in your trunk, I see no other way than to permit the law to take its course!——Good morning, Mrs. Dulanie," he added, bowing to that lady as he came out.

Honora returned his salutation with a cold nod, and passed into the cell.

"Well, my poor Agnes, what did you want?"

"Oh, the snake! the snake!" cried the girl, in loathing.

"What snake, good Agnes?"

"The snake that has just glided from my cell."

"Dr. Henry?"

"Yes, madam. He came here to renew his sinful proposals! He offered to save me on dishonorable terms!"

"Agnes, you astound me!" exclaimed the lady, sinking into a chair, and gazing in amazement upon the prisoner.

"Mrs. Dulanie, I do not know how it is that I bear to tell you!"

"Agnes, if you can but *prove* that he has made you these proposals you are saved!"

"Oh, Heaven, yes! so I should be. Well *you* can prove it, can you not? You know I called you, and you found him in my cell—did you not?" said Agnes, eagerly.

"Yes, dear girl, I did; but under circumstances that never would have led me to suppose that he had made you dishonorable proposals—quite the contrary. And whatever your statement may lead me to believe, the only *fact* to which I could testify would not help you."

"But would not my *own* oath be taken in evidence of his perfidy?"

"Poor girl! no; no more than it would be taken in evidence of your innocence."

"Oh, I see! Oh, the serpent! the serpent!"

They were interrupted by the entrance of Ernest Heine and a bailiff, who came to take the prisoner before a magistrate, to enter into a recognizance for her appearance before the criminal court.

Both Mrs. Dulanie and Agnes refrained for the present from mentioning the visit of Doctor Henry.

And when the business at the magistrate's office was concluded, Ernest Heine and his poor young wife removed to their temporary lodging—which was the same room at the warden's house that had once been occupied by Honora.

Agnes had never found courage to inform her lover of the original cause of Doctor Henry's persecution of herself; but now that her lover had become her husband, she felt that he was entitled to her unreserved confidence.

But how should she ever be able to tell him the tale?

It is true that at the magistrate's office, under the high pressure of terror, and to explain her position, she had told of the sinful conduct of the doctor; and also to Honora—a woman—she had related the story.

But how, for very modesty, should she ever manage to make the degrading disclosure to Ernest Heine? And how, for very terror, could she bear to witness his inevitable indignation, and see him go off to seek some fatal encounter with her persecutor?

Agnes was weak, timid, shrinking; she had nothing whatever of the trenchant bravery of Honora Dulanie's spirit. Therefore she relied on Honora, and resolved to consult her, and to be guided by her counsel.

That afternoon Mrs. Dulanie came in to see her, and Agnes explained her embarrassment.

"It is not only from very shame that I shrink from telling him, but also from fear for him. How must I blush to answer the questions he will certainly ask me? and how tremble to know that he will surely demand satisfaction of my enemy? Oh! if I do not tell him, my reserve will be a sort of 'misprison of treason;' and if I do, my communication will assuredly hurry him into more trouble! Advise me—what shall I do?" she asked in conclusion of her explanation.

"Tell your husband *all*—every jot and tittle; though your cheeks should burn with womanly shame in repeating the insults to which you have been subjected, and though they may grow pale with fear of the consequences the recital may entail, yet tell him the whole," replied Honora, firmly. "It is for you to feel the fullest faith in him who has so richly merited your trust, and it is for him to act according to his own judgment in the premises. Besides, my poor girl, you should understand that the knowledge of your great wrongs is absolutely necessary to your advocate in preparing your defence."

"Ah, yes—if I could gain credence! You, dear lady, believe me; so does Mr. Dulanie, and so does Ernest; but will any one else credit the unsupported statement of an obscure and friendless girl against the well-established reputation of Doctor Henry, and the circumstantial evidence he can produce? Would not to tell this story be to risk my dear Ernest's safety, without the smallest chance of securing my own? For oh! lady, there *is* no chance for me—none, none. I shall perish—irremediably perish; but I would not draw him down into destruction with me! Too greatly have I already wronged him in consenting to be his wife! I must do him no further harm; for oh! if it were to save my body from the burning, I would not have him scathe one hair of his head! Do you not know this?" she asked, wringing her hands.

"Yes—I know it! Nevertheless, poor Agnes, it is RIGHT that you should make this disclosure; and you should do right irrespective of consequences, leaving them to God—that is faith," said Honora, decidedly.

Mrs. Dulanie's decision of character governed poor Agnes; and that night, when Ernest Heine came home from his round of patients and entered her chamber, and their conversation turned upon the subject of her approaching trial, she told him all.

He heard her through almost without a comment; but with corrugated brows, gleaming eyes, and compressed lips—all more terrible in their stillness of suppressed excitement than the greatest outbreak of fury could have been!

And at the close of her recital he stooped and kissed her forehead and her hand; then arose, took down his hat, and turned to leave the room.

Agnes sprang after him and seized his hand, exclaiming—

"Ernest! oh, dear Ernest!—where are you going?"

"Nowhere, dear wife, but whither you may safely pray God speed me."

"Ah—but what are you about to do, Ernest?"

"Nothing, my much injured love, but what I may well ask God's blessing upon," he answered, pausing long enough to draw her upon his bosom in a parting embrace. Then releasing her, he ran down stairs, and out of the street door.

And Agnes re-entered her lonely chamber to walk the floor, weep, and wait for his return.

Ernest Heine threw himself upon horseback, and gallopped rapidly across the plains, through the forest, and over the mountain ridge that lay between the village and Farquier's Folly, at which he arrived by nine o'clock.

Drawing rein at the front portico, he sprang from his saddle, ran up the steps, and rang a peal that soon brought a servant in haste to open the door.

"Is your master in?"

"No, sir; he has just gone out."

"Whither?"

"To see a patient, sir."

"What patient?"

"'Deed I dunno, sir; one as sent for him in haste."

"Very well, I will wait for him," said the visitor, with grim resolution, striding into the hall, and throwing himself into a seat.

The servant looked perplexed; but being overawed by something in the aspect of the speaker, he bowed, retired, and left him to himself.

And for hours Ernest Heine sat there, with stern determination awaiting the arrival of Doctor Henry.

It was some time after midnight that, reluctantly giving up the hope of seeing the master of the house that night, the visitor, unwilling to torture his own wife by a longer absence from his home, arose and left the hall, re-mounted his horse, and rode rapidly towards the village.

It was near morning when he reached his lodgings, where he found Agnes up, and anxiously watching for him.

By her eager inquiries, she gained from him the fact that no rencounter had as yet taken place between himself and Doctor Henry; and for this postponement of the dreaded event the poor girl breathed a fervent—

"Thank God!"

The next day Ernest Heine again rode over to Farquier, but with no better success. The delinquent was not to be seen. And for many days thereafter he diligently sought the dastard, who quite as diligently kept out of the way.

At last, one Thursday afternoon, when he had surely tracked his enemy home to Farquier's Folly, he rode up to the door, threw himself from his horse, ran up the steps, and knocked with so imperious a hand that he quickly brought a servant in answer to his summons.

"Your master is at home now, for I saw him enter the house! Take my card to him immediately, and tell him that I am waiting impatiently to see him!" said the visitor, in a peremptory tone, thrusting the pasteboard into the hand of the negro.

"Yes, sir, but—," said the servant, hesitating.

"But *what*, you stupid fellow? What subterfuge now?" exclaimed the young gentleman, chafing with anger and impatience.

"Why, 'haps you is not 'ware, sir, as my mis'tess is dying, and my master was summon' in haste to come to her."

"Dying! Your mistress, Dr. Henry's wife, dying!"

"As I jes had the honor to 'form you, sir!"

"I believe you are deceiving me!" thought Ernest Heine, fixing a penetrating gaze upon the negro.

"Since when has Mrs. Henry been worse?"

"Ever since she hearn how Miss Agnes Darke was tuk up for steal——"

"SILENCE, villain!" thundered the young man, in a tone that made the negro turn almost white with terror. Then blaming himself for having spoken so furiously to a poor wretch, who only parrot-like repeated what he had heard, he inquired with a calmer manner:

"How long has Mrs. Henry been supposed to be dying?"

"Eber since she heern—what I telled yer honor," replied the negro, cautiously, and with chattering teeth.

His report was soon confirmed by the black nurse, who chanced to pass through the hall, in going down stairs upon an errand. And thus it was evident, even to the natural incredulity of the frequently deceived and baffled inquirer, that the mistress of the mansion was really in the last extremity, and thus also it followed that as he could not properly call a man from the bedside of a dying wife, justice must remain for the present in abeyance.

At sunset that evening, Alma Henry expired. And poor Agnes, hearing of the event, found tears to spare from her own personal sorrows, to give to the memory of her earliest friend.

On Sunday, the funeral of Mrs. Henry was solemnized with great pomp.

And on Monday, the spring term of the criminal court opened, and the trial of Agnes Darke, the first upon the docket, was expected to come on.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TRIAL OF AGNES DARKE.

> Stretch me no longer on the rack
> Of this rough world.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

Always the opening of the court-term collects a crowd of people at the county seat, and this occasion was far from being an exception to the rule. The town was full.

True, the trial of a poor girl for larceny is unhappily no such rare case as to make a public sensation; but then there were circumstances connected with that of Agnes Darke which constituted it one of peculiar interest.

She was beautiful, graceful, and accomplished; and though the child of humble parents, she was accustomed to mingle on something approaching to equal terms with the best society of the county.

She had been the principal witness in the late great murder trial, upon which occasion her loveliness of face, form and manner, no less than her painful reluctance to testify against the prisoner, had attracted general attention.

Now, her arrest upon the (for her) amazing charge of theft; her incredible statements so tremendously implicating the character of her prosecutor; the incomprehensible circumstance that the Dulanies, upon whom her testimony in the murder case had borne so fatally, were now her partizans; and above all, her strange marriage with Ernest Heine, on the morning after her arrest—all combined to excite a very great and general feeling of curiosity.

The case, confounding as it was, "lay in a nutshell."

Agnes Darke had hitherto been a girl not only of unblemished character, but of high reputation for piety.

Ernest Heine, who had given her the testimonial of his own name and hand, was a gentleman of known honor.

But then Doctor Henry, the prosecutor, was also a man of unquestioned truth.

From the data in their possession the little world of W. made up various opinions. The great majority having entire faith in the unquestionable reputation of Dr. Henry, utterly discredited the story of Agnes Darke, whom they looked upon as one of those wicked, artful and dangerous females whom it would be desirable to see imprisoned, hanged, or in any other way suppressed; and viewed Ernest Heine as the victim of her beauty, art, and machinations.

Others again putting equal trust in Dr. Henry's integrity, yet considered him harsh in prosecuting to the utmost extent of the law a poor orphan girl, scarcely past childhood, and benevolently hoped that there might be some mistake which the trial should clear up; and they heartily wished her and her generous protector well over their troubles.

No one, perhaps, except the Dulanies and Ernest Heine, doubted the honesty of Dr. Henry, or thoroughly believed in the innocence of Agnes.

All parties looked forward to the approaching trial with the deepest interest and curiosity.

But poor Agnes!

The morning of that fatal day found her pale, trembling and shrinking from the impending crisis even as the most guilty might shrink from conviction. Her failing limbs could scarcely support her while standing before the little mirror, arranging her morning dress; her quivering fingers could scarcely clasp the hooks of her black boddice; at length, indeed, she sank helplessly into a chair; and then her husband, with affectionate care, completed her toilet—tying on her small, black velvet bonnet, wrapping her in the little black mantle, and drawing on her tiny gloves.

"Now, my own dear love, trust in Heaven and be firm, will you not?" asked Ernest, as he stooped and kissed her.

"As the Lord shall give me grace!" she replied, clasping her hands.

The carriage was waiting at the door to convey her to the court-house.

Mrs. Wardour, her landlady, came up bringing a cup of strong coffee, which she kindly forced upon her young guest. While Agnes, to please her, drank a little, the good woman turned, half weeping, to Ernest Heine, and said—

"After this year I shall try to persuade Wardour to give up his office; for I think another such a court term as the last, along with seeing so much distress, would certainly break my heart!" and she took the empty cup from Agnes, and left the room.

Ernest Heine then conducted his poor wife down stairs, placed her in the carriage, and directed the coachman to drive to the court-house.

In ten minutes they had reached the place.

Ernest handed Agnes out, drew the vail closely around her face, and hurried her through the gaping crowd to the court-room, which was full of spectators, and where the judge, surrounded by lawyers and law officers, already occupied the bench.

Agnes, closely vailed, and almost fainting, was led to a seat beside her counsel, and in front of the bench.

Some time was spent in empanneling the jury and in other preliminaries, and then Agnes was placed at the bar.

She stood up, holding by the railing in front for support, and drew aside her vail, revealing such a sweet, child-like, innocent face, that every beholder was moved to pity and wonder, that such a young, pure, and lovely-looking creature should be standing there to answer such a charge.

"Prisoner at the bar, you have heard the indictment; are you guilty or not guilty of the felony therein charged upon you?" asked the clerk.

"Not guilty! *Indeed, indeed I am not, sir!*" rather informally replied poor Agnes, clasping her small hands, and raising her tearful eyes to Heaven, as if silently invoking Divine witness to her truth, and then sinking exhausted into her chair.

The trial began.

The public prosecutor opened the case, stating the theory of the theft in a few cold words, for, truth to tell, he did not relish his present duty, and his eye turned more in compassion than in denunciation upon the young creature whom, at worst, he regarded only as a very bad child, a fitter subject for a parent's chastening rod, than for a criminal court's judgment. Having stated his case, he proceeded to call his witnesses.

"Let Dr. Henry take the stand."

Every spectator turned towards that part of the court-room whence this gentleman was seen to arise and advance towards the box; and as he took his place to give in his testimony, every eye was riveted upon him in surprise, perplexity, and conjecture.

Could this be the handsome, graceful and fascinating Dr. Henry? His tall and elegant figure was bowed and tremulous; his fine face pallid and haggard; his eyes wild, as with pain, grief, or fear.

Being duly sworn, he commenced, and in a distracted and wandering manner gave the same testimony that he had offered at the preliminary examination—to the effect that he had often detected the prisoner at the bar in petty theft; that he had perseveringly endeavored to reform her; that, pitying her orphan condition, he had retained her in his family as long as he possibly could do so; that finding her perfectly incorrigible, he had at length felt obliged to dismiss her; that soon after her withdrawal from his house he had discovered the loss of the jewels that were the same night found in her possession.

Dr. Henry, as I said, gave in his testimony in a hesitating, faltering, and disjointed manner, that excited the surprise, curiosity, and speculation of all who saw and heard him.

"How unwilling he is to testify against the girl," said some. "How badly he feels; it is easy to see that he is a kind-hearted man," said others.

Ernest Heine, who stood at the back of his wife's chair, stooped and whispered to her—

"Look at that man, Agnes! If ever I saw PERJURER written legibly upon a human being's brow, it is impressed upon his!"

Agnes stole a glance at her persecutor, shuddered and withdrew her eyes. The poor girl was amazed and frightened at everything she saw and heard—the crowded court-room, the judge on the bench, the jury in their box, the array of lawyers, the formality of the proceedings, all awed and oppressed her to faintness—but this evil spirit, this haggard perjurer in the witness box, made her sick unto death with terror, loathing and abhorrence.

Dr. Henry, having finished his testimony, would have willingly withdrawn; but the counsel for the prisoner arose, and took him in hand for a cross-examination. But though the witness was evidently ill, unnerved and confused, yet he was very careful not to contradict himself, and so, successfully he passed the severe ordeal. Then pleading sickness, exhaustion, and sorrow from recent domestic affliction in the loss of his wife, he begged permission to withdraw, and was allowed to retire.

The two policemen who arrested Agnes Darke were next, in turn, examined. Each being duly sworn, testified to the finding of the casket of pearls in the possession of the prisoner.

The jewelry was then produced in court, and identified;—first by the policemen, as the same found in the trunk of Agnes Darke, and afterwards by Dr. Henry, who was recalled, as the property of his late wife.

The State's Attorney then briefly and coldly summed up the evidence, and the prosecution rested.

Mr. Wright, the counsel for the prisoner, arose for the defence. He gave, with more feeling and eloquence than sound logic, perhaps, his client's exposition of her case. He spoke of the prisoner's youth, beauty and grace; of her helpless orphanage and dependent position in the household of Dr. Henry; of her employer's illicit love and cruel pursuit of this fatherless, motherless, and friendless girl; of his alarming threats and machinations for her ruin; of the partial success, at least, with which those threats and machinations had been followed up. But did any one believe, he asked, that they could be successfully carried out? Could any one look upon the sweet, young face of his client, and doubt her spotless innocence? Or could they gaze upon the countenance of her prosecutor as he stood in the witness box, and give an instant's credence to his statements? The front of the one was the front of a demon—that of the other the face of an angel—yes, of an angel in woman's form, such as from the whole history of her blameless and beneficent life, he would prove her to be, by a host of witnesses, whom he should call for the purpose; but first of all, he said, he would indicate ONE, his friend Ernest Heine, whom they all knew to be a gentleman of the highest worth, but who could not legally testify in behalf of the prisoner, because since her arrest he had given her the strongest testimony it was possible to give of his confidence and esteem—he had given her his hand in marriage. The sole fact advanced against his client was the finding of the missing jewelry in her trunk. Was that one deceptive fact to be taken against the testimony of her whole good life, and that of the esteem of all who knew her well? How easily might that casket have been conveyed into her trunk for her destruction! How much more rational to suppose that it was thus treacherously put into her unconscious possession than that she who had lived from infancy a pure and pious life, should in one hour become a thief and a felon! The gentlemen of the jury must not, upon such slight grounds, consign a young, lovely, and innocent woman to the ignominy of a prison! Unless the State's Attorney could produce some stronger evidence he should demand for his client a prompt acquittal.

He then called in succession several highly respectable witnesses, who each, in turn, bore testimony to the excellent character hitherto sustained by Agnes Darke. And having thus made the best possible defence out of the poorest material, the counsel for the prisoner sat down.

The State's Attorney waived his privilege, or else dodged the duty of having the last word in the argument.

The judge arose to sum up the evidence and charge the jury. He reviewed the case in a clear, cold, candid manner, dwelling upon the testimony of Dr. Henry, and the finding of the stolen property in the possession of the prisoner, as evidence of the most positive character known in law; but exhorting them, if any doubt rested upon their minds as to the guilt of the prisoner, to let her have the benefit of that doubt.

The judge sat down and the jury retired under charge of the sheriff to deliberate upon their verdict.

When the green baize door had closed noiselessly after them, the stillness of suspended animation fell upon the court-room.

Like a statue sat the venerable judge upon his bench.

Like automata the lawyers bent their heads together and conversed, if they conversed at all, in almost inaudible whispers.

Pale and almost dying in the agony of this suspense, Agnes leaned back in her seat. Once she spoke in a hoarse whisper. Ernest Heine bent eagerly down to hear what she wished to say.

"*Oh! will it be long?*" she asked, in an expiring voice.

"No, dearest, we hope not; we trust that they will soon return with your acquittal; for even they *must* have a doubt; and the judge has instructed them to give you the benefit of that doubt! take courage, dearest Agnes," said her husband, seating himself beside her and drawing her fainting form within his arm, so that her head lay upon his shoulder.

Time crept slowly—slowly—past. An hour went by; another followed; and yet the jury came not.

"*Oh! will it be much longer?*" again groaned Agnes.

"No, no, dear love, it cannot be, you know!" replied her husband, changing his position, so as to ease her head, which still lay exhausted upon his shoulder.

Another hour crept slowly by, and still another. One by one the spectators withdrew from the court to procure refreshment, and the lawyers looked restless and the judge sleepy.

"*Oh, God! can it be much longer?*" wailed Agnes, in a dying tone.

"No, no, sweet wife, be patient; this very delay is a most auspicious omen. They could not acquit you without this debate," said Ernest, who then beckoned a bailiff to his side and dispatched him to the nearest restaurant for refreshments.

The messenger returned with wine and crackers which Ernest Heine tried to press upon the acceptance of his wife. But she put them away, saysaying:

"Dear Ernest, I can not. If I could, I would do it for your sake; but my throat is constricted; I can scarcely speak; I can not possibly swallow." And her head dropped again upon his shoulder.

And still slowly, slowly moved the leaden hours. The clock struck seven. The judge arose from his seat and the court was adjourned to ten o'clock the next morning.

Lifting Agnes in his arms, Ernest Heine bore her to the carriage, took her home, and laid her, in an almost expiring condition, upon the bed. Then he summoned the kind-hearted hostess, and, with her assistance, he applied all his medical skill to the restoration of the nearly dying girl. It was a long time before she spoke, and then it was in a manner that went to the hearts of those who heard her—

"Oh! Ernest, Ernest! this is very terrible! the blackness of darkness! Oh! Ernest, dear, let me die! it is the most merciful thing you can do for me!"

"Dear Agnes, try to take courage! be firm and patient, love! This delay is really auspicious and it *cannot* last much longer. Shall I send for Mrs. Dulanie to come to you?"

"No, no; I wish to see no one—not even her; I only want *you*, dear, devoted friend, to be with me *while yet you may*," she said.

What a miserable night was that which followed!

Agnes never slept for an instant, but lay with her eyes closed and her hands clasped above her head, silently praying for death as for a priceless blessing.

Ernest Heine sat beside her bed watching her with devoted affection. Yes, it was a miserable night! But even more miserable was the next fatal day!

At ten o'clock, Agnes, in the same half-dying state, was lifted from her bed, and, by the united assistance of Ernest Heine and Mr. Wardour, she was dressed and conducted to the carriage which was to convey her to the court-house.

On arriving thither she was lifted out and supported into the court-room to the same seat she had occupied on the previous day,

Her husband sat down beside her and took her head upon his shoulder.

The court-room was even more crowded than on the preceding day; but a strange stillness prevailed throughout the assembly.

As before, hour after hour of breathless suspense passed.

The sheriff sometimes passed backwards and forwards between the court-room and the jury-room; but nothing could be learned from his impassable countenance. A rumour was however beginning to be circulated to the effect that the jury was "hung."

"*Oh! God of mercy! can it be much longer?*" groaned Agnes, from the depth of her anguish.

"Pray to God! be patient! be firm, sweet Agnes!" whispered her husband,

Another dreary hour passed, and then a buzz went through the court of, "They are coming!" and the door was thrown open and the jury came in.

Ernest Heine felt spasm after spasm convulse the form of his wife, as she rested on his bosom. He looked up quickly to see if he could read her fate in the faces of those who held it in their hands. And his own heart seemed to die in his bosom as he saw them advance, two by two, with grave faces bent upon their breasts. The prevision of his heart was true. The verdict was—

"GUILTY!"

As this dreadful word fell from the foreman's lips, Ernest Heine felt the spasms that shook his wife's form suddenly cease.

"Let the prisoner stand up to receive the sentence of the law," ordered the court.

"She has fainted, I fear, your honor," replied the broken-hearted Ernest.

But to his surprise he felt Agnes move and flutter on his bosom, and the next instant she arose and, pale indeed as death, stood up.

And amid the profound silence that ensued the judge pronounced her doom. For her alleged offence the law procribed imprisonment for a term of not less than five or more than twenty years. The judge, in well-meant mercy, gave her the minimum. She was sentenced to five years of confinement at hard labor in the State's prison—the sentence to take effect upon the following Friday.

At the conclusion of his words Agnes sank back in her seat.

"Oh, Agnes! Oh, my wife!" burst in anguish from the lips of her husband as he bent over her.

"No, no wife of yours now; only a convict; dear Ernest, see—I can bear this certainty of the worst better than that suspense which stretched my whole soul upon the rack. Take comfort; think that you have done all that humanity could possibly do for the poor lost girl; you took me to the shelter of your warm, strong heart, and threw over me the shield of your name and legal protection. Let the thought of your perfect goodness to me console you when I am gone. Good-bye, and may God comfort, love, and bless you—noble heart!" she said.

"Agnes! Agnes! Oh! that I could die for you!" he cried.

"Let the prisoner be removed from the court," ordered the judge.

"I am very sorry, Dr. Heine, but I am forced, you know, to take away my prisoner," whispered the sheriff at his elbow.

"Oh, Agnes! Agnes! must you be torn from me!" he cried, loosing all self-command.

"Ernest! dear Ernest! do you take courage now! be the Christian hero that you were! Bless me and let me go," said Agnes.

After all the mortal anguish of her suspense, how awfully calm she was, now that all hope had fled and the very worst was known.

"Dr. Heine," said the pitying sheriff, "you can go with her to the prison, you know; give her your arm and support her to the carriage, for, notwithstanding her admirable fortitude, you see she is physically very feeble."

Ernest Heine, with an ejaculatory prayer, arose and did as he was permitted. And leaning on his arm and closely followed by the sheriff, Agnes was conducted from the court and placed in the carriage. A drive of five minutes brought her to the prison, where she was met by the compassionate warden, who conducted her back to her former cell, where the sheriff left her.

Ernest Heine was permitted to remain with her for a short time.

And Mrs. Dulanie, who had with great grief heard of the verdict, as soon as she could sufficiently compose her excited feelings, came to visit her.

"Do not despair, but pray, dear Agnes," she said. "God reigns, and his power is greater than our greatest extremity. You may yet be cleared, for while there is life there is hope."

"I know it," answered Agnes, calmly, "and *I, too, hope*."

But while she spoke, how short her breathing was!

With newly-aroused fear her husband noticed this, and saying—

"You are very much exhausted, Agnes; let me lay you down." He gently took her in his arms and placed her in an easy position on the cot. Still her breathing grew shorter, her face paler, her lips bluer, her eyes dimmer.

"I have some spirits of lavender—a fine restorative—in my medicine-chest; let me go and fetch it," said Mrs. Dulanie, leaving the cell for the expressed purpose, while Dr. Heine sat beside the sufferer, anxiously watching her countenance, holding her hand, and smoothing her forehead.

When the lady returned with the restorative, he would have put it to her lips, but she waived it off and sadly shook her head; and when he would have pressed the cordial on her acceptance, she sorrowfully smiled, saying—

"Dear friends, it would be a cruel kindness to place a cordial to the lips of one who is fainting on the rack; it would be a merciful neglect to suffer such a one to die."

"But, dear Agnes," said Mrs. Dulanie, "you must live! live and recover and hope! Your sentence, will never be carried into effect."

"*I know it will not, madam*," answered Agnes, with a strange smile.

"I speak it from a certain conviction, Agnes," said Honora.

"And I also, lady," added Agnes, with the same sweet, solemn manner.

"I mean, dear Agnes, that my husband, who is a lawyer, you know, is now engaged in drawing up a petition to the governor in your name and behalf. Before twelve o'clock that petition will be signed by a hundred persons; before to-morrow night it will be in the hands of the executive. Governor Sterne saw and admired you at Piedmont; he can't but remember and compassionate you; and I have no doubt that before Thursday evening the pardon will be in the hands of the sheriff."

"Ah, madam, to be pardoned for a crime I could never have committed—could such a thing as *that* save me?" inquired Agnes, with bitter and sorrowful emphasis.

Mrs. Dulanie had nothing to reply to that searching question; but after a little while she said—

"Agnes, *how* you will be saved, I do not know, but that you *will be* I feel sure. The justice of Heaven is your security."

As she spoke there came a knock at the door; it was from Mr. Wardour, who had all this time been keeping guard outside, and who now put in his head to warn them that the hour for locking up having arrived, Dr. Heine must take leave of his wife; secondly, that Mr. Dulanie had ready the petition for the doctor to carry around.

"And so, dear Agnes, I must bid you good-night, as I must obtain every possible signature before I leave for Richmond, where I understand the governor is now returned," said Ernest Heine, and stooping, he pressed a kiss upon the brow of the stricken girl.

"You will care for her and comfort her, Mrs. Dulanie?" he asked, turning to the lady.

"As if she were my sister," replied Honora.

Another prayerful kiss upon the pallid brow of the sufferer, a deferential bow to Honora, and Ernest Heine reluctantly withdrew from the cell.

Mrs. Dulanie remained near the poor convicted girl till long after midnight, when she left her apparently sleeping the sleep of exhaustion.

It was not really so. Poor Agnes had feigned this sleep that the lady might rest.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RESCUE.

> Burning heart and beating brow,
> Ye are very quiet now.
>
> E. B. BROWNING.

As Honora had said, before twelve o'clock that night a hundred signatures were obtained to the petition for the pardon of Agnes. At midnight, Ernest Heine threw himself into the mail coach that at that hour passed through W. on its way to Richmond, and commenced his anxious journey.

In still greater anxiety passed the hours to those left behind.

Honora could not sleep. Early she arose and called to Tom Turner, who kept guard in the lobby, to unlock her door; and being free, she went very quietly across to the cell of Agnes, and peeping through the grating, she saw the poor girl lying wide awake, with her wild eyes flared back, and fixed upon the ceiling.

"Agnes, did you sleep well?" she inquired.

"If I did not I shall soon, dear lady," replied the prisoner.

"Mr. Turner, please unlock the door, and let me in to her," said the lady.

The turnkey flew to do her bidding, and she passed in to the sufferer, sat down beside her, spoke soothingly to her, bathed her face and hands, and finally dispatched Tom Turner for a cup of strong coffee, which, when brought, she coaxed her to drink. In a word, Mrs. Dulanie remained as long as she possibly could do without neglecting her husband, and did all that was possible to be done to alleviate the condition of the unfortunate girl. She divided her time and attention almost equally between the two prisoners.

But through all that miserable day, Agnes remained extended upon her prison cot, her wild, black hair streaming down each side her pallid face, her thin, transparent hands pressed upon her eyes, as if to shut out light and life, her form motionless or trembling; patiently she bore her anguish; obediently she did all that she was told to do; thankfully she took every restorative that was offered her; and yet through all, it was easy to see that she did these things rather for the sake of those who attended her, than from any hope of benefit.

"A sufferer so hopeless, so gentle and so resigned, I never saw before," said Honora to Godfrey.

"If her sentence is carried into effect, she cannot live a week, nor indeed, in that case, would it be desirable that she should," he replied.

Through all the miserable night that followed, Agnes lay sleepless but uncomplaining. Near midnight, as before, she feigned sleep, that Honora, who was watching her, might go to rest.

The next morning, Thursday, Mrs. Dulanie, as on the day preceding, went early to her cell, where she found her lying upon her back, with her hands clasped above her head, and her open eyes fixed vacantly upon the ceiling in unwinking wakefulness.

This was the day upon which Dr. Heine was expected to return.

The stage from Richmond would reach W., bringing, in all probability, Dr. Heine with the pardon, at about sunset. If so, then Agnes would, before tea-time, leave the prison for her home.

Honora reminded her of this probability, and sought to infuse hope into her despairing heart, to revive her drooping spirit, and nerve her failing strength.

But then again, should the pardon *not* be granted, this was the last, last day she could be permitted to remain, even in this county prison cell, in reach of her friends; for the next day, Friday, it was appointed that her sentence should be carried into effect—that she should be conveyed to the State's penitentiary at Richmond. And through this day, as through the preceding one, poor Agnes lay almost lifeless, with her wild, black hair streaming down each side her pallid face, and straggling over the coverlid; her pale hands pressed upon her eyes to shut out the daylight, and her fragile form motionless or convulsed, or, towards evening, starting up in eager listening, as for some approaching footstep.

"What excites you so, poor child?" inquired Honora, on seeing her spring up in this manner for the third or fourth time.

"I was listening for *him!* oh, how I fear he will not come to-night—that he will wait for the pardon—the pardon that will not be given him today, nor to-morrow, nor any other day; but I fear that he will wait for it, and so not come until it is too late!"

"It is your nervousness; never fear, dear Agnes, but that *he* will surely come. The stage is late, I know; but then the roads, this thawing weather, are very bad; the coach will be in the village, and he will be in your presence very soon now," said the lady, cheerfully.

Agnes for a little while lay still, with her hands pressed upon her eyes, and then, snatching them away, she started up and listened eagerly, as usual.

"It is nothing but a carriage rolling down the street, my dear."

She sank back, silent and fainting, and then, removing her hands from her eyes, she looked around wildly, murmuring—

"Am I going blind, or is it growing dark, Mrs. Dulanie?"

"Growing dark?" Why, the setting sun was streaming through the grating, marking the panes in golden squares upon the floor of the cell. Mrs. Dulanie looked at the poor girl in astonishment, and saw with alarm that her face was darkened with a gray shadow, and her eyes glazed over with a dimness, as of approaching death. Honora flew out and brought a glass of wine, which she forced Agnes to drink.

"I am dying, am I not, lady?" inquired the prisoner, faintly.

"No, no; you are exhausted, that is all. Momentary failure of the eyesight is very often the effect of nervous prostration," replied Honora, eagerly.

"Hark! he has come! That is he at last—I know his step!" exclaimed Agnes, starting up for the last time, and listening with suspended breath.

It was indeed his step. Honora also recognized it as it came near the cell.

"He has not got the pardon, lady; I know it by the slowness and heaviness of his footfall; but I knew it also before," said Agnes.

The door opened and Dr. Heine entered, pale, worn and heart-broken, and stood gazing for a moment in despairing silence upon Agnes, then he approached and sunk upon his knees beside her cot, and extended his hands, as if to catch her to the shelter of his bosom.

He could not tell her in words that he had failed of saving her.

She half arose and cast her arms around his neck, and dropped her head upon his breast.

"Do not mind it, dear Ernest; I am not disappointed; I knew it would be so; dear Ernest, do not grieve so bitterly—all will be well," she said, tenderly caressing him as he bowed his head and wept—wept as only a strong, brave man can weep.

"All will be well; a few days and this dark cloud will be lifted from your life; dear Ernest, take courage," she repeated, for the few drops of wine that Honora had caused her to swallow lent her this strength to speak.

"Oh, that I could die to deliver you, gentle and innocent one! Oh, that I could suffer in your stead!" he exclaimed, with a strong burst of sorrow.

"You suffer *more* than I do; see, I do not suffer much; believe me, all will very soon be *well*."

While the heart-broken young couple thus conversed, Honora sat, pale with pity, silently praying for them, but offering no word of comment.

At last, when Ernest, kneeling beside the cot, had compelled himself into a state of composure, and Agnes, reclining back upon her pillow, still kept her hand resting upon his shoulder, as in benediction, and her eyes fixed upon his face in deep affection, the sweet and solemn tones of Honora gently rose upon the silence.

"All is not lost in the first disappointment," she said; "the governor may yet relent; he could not, perhaps, grant an immediate pardon; he would probably think some delay due in respect to the court. Dear Agnes, try to bear up, love; dear Ernest, take courage; you are both good; trust in God for deliverance," and stooping, she pressed a kiss upon the brow of Agnes, and clasped the hand of Ernest. The one returned her kindness with an earnest grasp, the other with a grateful glance, but neither spoke.

Honora arose to retire and leave them alone.

But at that moment there came a rap at the cell door, and the next instant Mr. Wardour presented himself, saying, with visible regret—

"I am very sorry, Dr. Heine, but the hour has arrived for shutting up, and——"

"Very well, I must withdraw, I suppose," said the young man, repressing the groan that arose to his lips.

"I grieve to say, yes, sir; but here is the sheriff outside, who would like to say a few words to you."

"I am at his orders. Agnes, my love," he said, gently disengaging her hand from around his shoulder, and bending over her, "I must commit you to Heaven and to Mrs. Dulanie, and bid you good night for the present. At the earliest hour of opening to-morrow, I shall be with you again. Good night, dear love," and unmindful of the glances that might rest upon them, he bent and pressed a kiss upon her lips.

She took both his hands in hers, and holding them, gazed long and earnestly into his eyes; then, with a whispered "God bless you, Ernest," she let them go.

He hurried from the cell. In the lobby the sheriff joined him, and they walked down together to the warden's office, where Mr. Harrison handed a chair to his companion, and taking another, entered into conversation by saying—

"You should be told, Doctor, that I must set out with my prisoner for the penitentiary to-morrow."

"I know—I know," escaped in sudden gasps from the frozen lips of the young man, as he dropped his pallid and perspiring brow upon the palms of his hands. There was silence for a little while, broken at last by Ernest, who inquired—

"At what hour and by what conveyance do you take her?"

"At eight o'clock in the morning, in a close carriage, which I deemed a more judicious conveyance than the stage coach."

"Yes, yes," agreed the young man, mechanically.

"But, doctor, I did not bring you here to lacerate your feelings vainly; I wished to make a proposition to you."

"Go on," said Ernest, in apathetic despair.

"I wished to tell you," said the sheriff, "that there is no absolute necessity for your being separated from her until the latest moment; in a word, there is no necessity for your bidding her a final farewell, until the doors of the penitentiary are about to close upon her."

"Oh, God! my God!" groaned the young man, as this image was evoked before his "mind's eye."

"Do not take it so hard, sir; no doubt it will all come right in the end; she will soon be set at liberty, and you can take her off to the West or the South, where this affair has never been heard of."

The young man shook his head in heart-broken hopelessness.

"But to the point," continued the sheriff; "I can trust you, sir, I know, and so I am willing to incur the responsibility of making you an offer. I shall, as I said, take her away in a close carriage. There are four seats. Myself and my prisoner will occupy two, a constable will fill a third, the fourth one is heartily at your service, if you wish to accompany her on this sad journey, and will give me your word of honor that no attempt to interrupt the due course of law will be made."

"I thank you, sir, and will give you the required pledge," said Ernest Heine, in a hoarse and hollow voice.

And the interview ended.

Ernest Heine went back to his desolate lodging at the warden's house, not to sleep, but to pass the night in prayer for *her*.

Agnes in her cell, meanwhile, lay as he had left her—lay as she had lain every day and night since her conviction—with her pale hands pressed upon her eyeballs, and her wildly disheveled black hair streaming over the coverlid. The fictitious strength lent her by the glass of wine was fast ebbing away.

Honora, watching beside her, saw her increasing pallor and faintness, and bending over her, whispered—

"Agnes, dear, had you not better take something to sustain your strength?"

"No, dear lady," replied the feeble voice; "I only wish to sleep; bid me good night and leave me to repose."

"I will sit with you until you slumber, then I will go," replied Honora.

"Stoop over me and kiss me, then, for I am going to sleep," murmured the failing voice.

Honora bent and kissed her again and again.

"There, that will do, sweet lady. God bless you, God love you, God comfort you in all your sorrows, as you have sought to comfort me. Good night," said the poor girl, and pressing the hands of Honora to her heart and to her lips, she resigned them, and laid her own hands up over her eyes as before.

Still Honora sat and watched, and soon, by her regular breathing, she believed the sufferer to be at last asleep. She stooped over her and gazed upon her, to assure herself of the fact, and then, feeling reasonably certain that, for the present, the sorrows of that poor young heart were soothed in slumber, she softly sank down upon her knees beside the bed, and earnestly prayed for the deliverance of the innocent captive.

Then Honora arose and giving another look to Agnes, and feeling farther convinced of the depth of her repose, she gently tapped upon the door and beckoned Tom Turner, on guard in the lobby, to come and let her out. The good-natured turnkey hastened to set the lady at liberty, and when she had left the cell, he re-locked the door; for since her conviction, poor Agnes had been a close prisoner.

Honora crossed to her own apartment and retired to bed; but despite the utter weariness of her many nights' watching she could not sleep. The thought of that poor, innocent, persecuted girl and her hideous fate kept her awake until very near the morning, when, from sheer prostration, she fell into a disturbed slumber.

It was yet early when she awoke; her first returning thought was of Agnes. She started up, threw on her dressing-gown, hurried across the lobby, and looked through the grating of Agnes's cell, and, as she gazed, a piercing cry broke from her lips. For there lay the hapless girl prone upon her back, her head fallen upwards across the pillow; her face dark and pallid; her lips blue and rigid; her eyes wide open and frozen in their sockets; her hands, that had slipped away from her face, tightly contracted, as if she had died in struggles. One moment after the cry of horror had escaped her lips, Honora stood and gazed, and then rushing from the cell door, she called—

"Mr. Turner! Mr. Turner! for the love of Christ, come here! She is dead! dead in her prison cell!"

Quick as lightning Tom Turner came running from the other extremity of the lobby and in an instant unlocked the door.

Honora burst in and lifted the head of the lifeless girl, while the turnkey followed and stood beside her, wringing his hands and crying—

"Oh, poor thing! poor thing!"

"Mr. Turner, run; run and bring Dr. Heine! Life may not yet be extinct."

The good-natured officer hastened away to do his errand; but, ere he reached the head of the stairs, he saw Dr. Heine, who had just gained admittance, coming up. Wanting the moral courage to tell him what had happened, the turnkey only beckoned him to come faster, and led the way to the cell. Without suspicion of the event, Ernest Heine hastened up the lobby and entered the cell, where he found Agnes lying as we have described her, and Honora standing beside the bed, desperately trying to rub warmth into the lifeless hands.

He saw the truth at the first glance, looked for an instant as if turned to stone by the sight; then rushing to the bedside he caught the body up in his arms; gazed into the face; laid it down again, rubbed and chafed the hands; groaned, invoked her by every fond epithet to revive, to return to life; called upon God and angels to give her back to his love; then finally he rushed from the cell, and after an absence of a very few minutes, returned with powerful stimulants, some of which he poured into the lifeless lips, and with some of which he chafed the frozen temples and rigid hands.

Useless his efforts! He seemed to know they were so, even while he continued them.

Suddenly he laid them all aside, took a spring lancet from a little pocket-case, stripped up the sleeve of her left arm and opened a vein; but not one drop of the coagulated vital fluid flowed out to give him hope of returning life.

Useless all! he felt it now; and closed his lancet, drew down her sleeve, reverently laid her body back upon the cot, and stood gazing upon it—the image of utter despair!

"Dear friend, be comforted! Oh, be sure it is better as it is," prayed Honora through her streaming tears.

"'Dead! dead, and alone' in her prison cell," said Ernest Heine, gazing in anguish upon the lovely, lifeless form.

"Oh take comfort! It is *well* that her sorrows are all over; that she is safe forever in the bosom of her Lord."

"'Dead and alone' in her prison cell," reiterated Ernest Heine, mechanically gazing upon the beautiful wreck before them.

"The angel of God came down and delivered her from prison; and all is well with *her*," said Honora, still seeking to ameliorate the dreadful despair of the mourner.

But he stood as if frozen to the spot, gazing upon the rigid form.

As yet the news of her death had not spread, even through the prison.

Tom Turner stood at the cell door, with his thin, sharp face still more contracted through sorrow and sympathy, when the step of the sheriff was heard along the lobby.

He came, followed by the warden. Evidently neither of them knew anything of what had occurred; for as they approached the cell the sheriff said to the warden:

"Go in, if you please, and let the prisoner know that she should be ready in fifteen minutes to take the road." But as they appeared at the door, Honora met them, and said:

"Mr. Harrison, your prisoner has escaped you."

"Escaped!" re-echoed the sheriff, in consternation.

"Ay! she is at liberty."

"At liberty!"

"Even so! her case has been reviewed by a higher tribunal; her sentence has been reversed by a higher Judge, from whose decision there is no appeal."

"Madam! what mean you?" asked the sheriff, in vague foreboding.

"Come and see," said Honora.

They entered the cell.

"Dead!!" exclaimed the sheriff, in horror, as his eye fell upon the figure on the cot. "Dead!!"

"Nay," replied Honora, solemnly, "not dead, but liberated."

In deep awe the sheriff drew nearer and gazed upon the lovely, lifeless form lying extended on the cot, as still, as cold and white as some beautiful marble effigy; and then silently withdrew from the cell.

It was then that Tom Turner, looking from the window, saw Dr. Henry, and uttered his name.

At the sound of that name, Ernest Heine suddenly raised his head like a staunch hunter that sniffs the game, and starting up from his kneeling posture beside the cot, he rushed to the window and looked out, and then darted from the cell. And in less time than it will take to write the words he was heard hastening up the stairs, and dragging something along the lobby. And the next instant he appeared at the door—his complexion livid, his eyes blazing, his arm nerved by fierce anger, his hand upon the collar of Dr. Henry, whom he literally dragged, trembling, cowering, and almost unresisting, into the cell.

Forcing him to the side of the cot, he pointed to the lifeless figure, and said—

"*There, murderer!* look upon your work!"

"Madman! let go my collar!" gasped the strongly agitated man, feebly struggling.

But the hand that was upon him was like the hand of a giant.

"Look upon your work!" he repeated, in a hoarse whisper—"and after *this* looking, for *you*, and from ME, there will be yet *another*—'a fearful looking for of judgment!'" and tightening his grasp, he raised and hurled the miscreant with such force from the cell, that he fell prone upon the floor of the lobby.

Those who beheld this scene, regarded it with breathless amazement. That Dr. Henry, a fine, athletic man, should have suffered himself to be dragged like a slave to the cell of his victim, held there and forced to look upon her, and then hurled like a dog through the door; that his face should have blanched, his teeth chattered, and his frame shook, so as to leave him powerless in the grasp of his enemy—was incomprehensible. They looked after him, saw him lift himself from his prostrate position, and heard him mutter—"He is mad; he need not be minded," as he slunk away from the spot. They could not understand it. Only Honora murmured to herself—

"'Thus oft it haps that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes vail their eyes
Before their meanest slave.'"

* * * * * * * * *

After the delay of several hours, consumed in the usual medical investigations, the body of Agnes was pronounced quite dead, and given up to the disposal of her friends.

Ernest Heine received it and conveyed it to his office, across the street, where, with the aid of charitable women, it was laid out and prepared for burial.

And on Sunday morning her humble funeral procession left the office for the village churchyard, in which her lowly grave had been prepared.

Afterwards a white stone was placed at its head bearing her name and this scripture text:

"The Damsel is not Dead!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

TOLERATION.

BY FINLEY JOHNSON.

Though in the matters of our faith
We cannot all agree;
Yet in the bonds of friendly love,
We can united be;
For weak indeed must be that creed,
In fact not worth a feather;
Whose advocates refuse to kneel,
In love and peace together.

This world indeed would wiser be
If all would cease contention,
If none would strengthen by his acts
The rank weeds of dissension.
If each and every one would strive,
In love's wide field to labor;
Choose his own creed—and also give
The same right to his neighbor.

A DUEL ON THE GULF.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

During the summer of 1836, William Burt commanded one of the United States Mail Steamers plying between New Orleans and Mobile. He belonged in New England, and in the spring of the above year he spent a month with his friends and relatives in the latter section. While at home he became strongly attached to a young man named Edgar Romney, a distant relative of his wife, and when he got ready to leave for the South, he urged Edgar to go with him. The youth—only twenty-four—had just graduated at Harvard University, and having no business upon his hands, and, moreover, being blessed with no great amount of money, he concluded to accept Burt's offer, which was the office of clerk on his boat. Romney was a slight-built, delicate-looking young man, long and hard study having made him pale and thin; but he was quick and active, and the bright sparkle of his clear gray eye told that his small frame held a great and free spirit.

Edgar entered upon his duties as soon as he reached Mobile, and ere long he had won the confidence and esteem, not only of the officers and men on the route, but of all the travelers who became acquainted with him. His manners were quiet and unassuming; he was polite and attentive to all who asked for information or assistance; and yet he maintained a dignity that never left him. Captain Burt loved him as though he had been a brother, and the affection was mutual.

One day, as the steamer was taking in the last of her load at New Orleans, Edgar received a slap upon the shoulder that made him start.

"A new clerk, eh? And Yankee, too. I thought Yankees were bigger!"

The youth turned and found the speaker to be a tall, muscular fellow, dressed extravagantly, with a profusion of black hair upon the face, and an evil, debauched look.

"You are familiar, sir," said Edgar, with a disdainful curl of the lip.

"Eh? Proud, is it? By the powers, my boy, you'll have that taken out of ye before you've been long in these parts."

The clerk gave the fellow a look of disgust, and then turned to his business; and with a muttered "Umph!" the stranger passed on into the cabin.

"Do you know that man?" asked the pilot, who had stood near.

"No," returned Edgar. "I never saw him before. Who is he he?"

"That is Archy Lodman."

"Lodman?" repeated the youth, in quiet surprise. "The gamester and duelist?"

"Yes," resumed the pilot. "That is the man—the most desperate character upon the gulf. He's been up the river, I guess. I haven't seen him here before for a month."

Edgar was here called away, and the pilot went forward to the wheel-house. In due time the boat was cast loose, and steamed it down the river. There were a number of passengers on board, and the clerk was soon busy in receiving their fares.

"How's yer pride now, me boy?" Edgar heard a rough voice exclaim, as a new bank-note, all crumpled and twisted, was shoved under his nose. He looked up and saw Archy Lodman.

"If you'll attend to your own business, I'll attend to mine," said the young clerk, with a flash in the eye, and a quick flush upon the cheek.

"Crusty for a green 'un, ain't he?" the ruffian replied, turning to a companion who wore a hang-dog look.

"Cussedly so," was the response, and the two walked off together.

It was night by the time the boat entered the gulf, and ere long the cards were flying in the saloon. Archy Lodman was in his element now, and he handled the "bits of board" with a graceful skill.

"Play?" he said, addressing a young man who stood close by, watching his movements. "Just for a bit of sport."

"If you can make up a party I don't mind," the passenger replied. He was a slim, gentlemanly-looking young fellow, not over five-and-twenty, and proud to be the son of a wealthy Louisiana planter.

"I wouldn't play with that man," whispered a voice in his ear.

The youth turned and saw Edgar Romney. They had met several times at the St. Charles, and being congenial spirits, had become warm friends. Romney knew that William Balfour had been drinking generously with some of his companions in the city, and he feared he might be led into trouble.

"Never fear for me," young Balfour returned, evidently a little touched to think that his friend should regard him as incapable of caring for himself.

Edgar saw the feeling in a moment, and he said no more; but he noticed the savage look which Lodman gave him, for the gamester had read his purpose.

In a little while a party of four was made up, and the game commenced—a game of poker—the hang-dog looking man being one of them.

For a while things went on quite smoothly, Balfour winning over a hundred dollars; but finally the play became more exciting, and the stakes were increased. Romney watched the proceedings narrowly, for he saw that Balfour was to be fleeced. He could see it in the snake-like fire of the blackleg's eye, and in his handling of the cards.

Balfour won five hundred dollars, and then lost it. Then he won a hundred with one hand, and then lost two hundred. He did not know that he was winning or losing at the will of another; but Romney saw it very plainly. Presently the young man held three trays and two queens. He "saw" and "went better" until he had staked over a thousand dollars.

"I must call you," said Lodman, assuming an anxious appearance, as he covered the last bet.

"Three trays and two queens," uttered Balfour, throwing down his cards.

"By the trump of trumps, just ahead, and that's all. *Three fives, and the other pair of queens!*" And as Lodman spoke he showed his hand and raked down the money.

During the next few minutes there were no good hands out, Lodman winning by "bluffing," and thus keeping the deal. Finally Balfour held four jacks, and commenced the betting nervously. It was plain to be seen that he had never before played with sharpers, for he seemed to feel sure of winning now.

"Fifty better," said Lodman, putting down his money.

"I see that, and go a hundred better," added Balfour.

At this point the hang-dog and his *vis-a-vis* threw up their hands.

"A hundred better than that," replied the sharper.

Then Balfour increased his stake to five hundred, and finally to a thousand. Ere long there were fifteen thousand dollars upon the table, the youth having made a bet of two thousand.

"You may beat me," said Lodman, "but I'll be either made or broken, so here's to see you, and here are four thousand dollars better!"

William Balfour sank back in his chair, and with a sort of vacant look gazed upon the hand he held. ~~He turned an inquiring look upon his friend, who~~ stood behind him, but Edgar's eye was fixed with a strange intensity upon the blackleg. Finally William drew a long breath, and then placed his hand within the bosom of his vest, and took out a sealed packet. With a trembling hand he tore it open, and took therefrom four notes of a thousand dollars each. It was money entrusted to his care by his father for the payment of a mortgage in Mobile.

"I see your four thousand and call you!" the youth said, in a hoarse whisper.

A score of the passengers had collected about the table, and all was breathless excitement.

"Four kings!" said Lodman, spreading his cards.

"Lost!" groaned Balfour, dropping his hand, and then clasping his brow.

"*Stop, villain!*" shouted Edgar Romney, in trumpet tones, as Lodman started to rake down the money. "I have watched you well! I have seen you stock and mark those cards, and exchange hands, and conceal high pairs between your knees, till you had given just such hands as suited your purpose! Touch that money, and you die on the spot!" And as he spoke he drew a pistol from his bosom.

"Aha!" uttered the blackleg, starting up from his chair, and drawing a like weapon from his pocket: "Is that your game, my proud cove? Come on deck, and we'll try that! Come—white-livered, meddling coward!"

"No, no!" cried young Balfour, starting up between the two: "You shall not do this, Edgar!"

"Back, William! Let the miserable villain follow me!"

"Follow *me!*" shouted Lodman, leaping up the cabin stairs.

All was now excitement and confusion in the saloon. Captain Burt had come down, and he tried to dissuade Edgar from going up.

"Would you have me shrink like a craven before that villain?" the youth cried, in vehement tones. "He has picked upon me before, and I know he has meant a quarrel from the first."

"But you should have taken no notice of him, Edgar," returned Burt, anxiously.

"I had resolved not to do so, Captain; but when I saw him deliberately rob my friend—when I saw him resort to such villainous tricks for the accomplishment of his purpose—and when I knew that his victim was staking his very honor in the unequal contest, how could I help it? I could not. But it's too late now. I can't back out. Come—see me through it."

At that time, and in that place, there seemed no other alternative; for had Edgar refused to fight now, the villain would have insulted him without mercy. Burt knew this—they all knew it—and, much as they loved the youthful clerk, they saw not how he could escape the hostile meeting he had himself in a measure provoked. The captain might have forbidden it, but that would only have delayed the affair—not prevented it.

Edgar went on deck, and the passengers followed him. The moon was at its full, and her soft beams fell upon the waters of the gulf and upon the peopled deck with an effulgence almost equal to noon-day.

"Ah—you've come, eh?" cried the powerful duelist, with a sneer. "I expected you would have thought it more safe below. But take your place. We need no seconds here. All know the deadly provocation you have given me. Who shall count for us?"

"I'll count," said the man with the hang-dog face.

One more attempt was made by William Balfour to save his friend.

"Let me take your place, Edgar," he urged, earnestly.

"No!" replied the clerk. "Stand back! The quarrel is mine!"

A space was now cleared in the gangway, Romney standing upon one side of the deck, and Lodman upon the other. All was still save the plash of the water, as the sharp bows cut through their track, and the moon looked down as brightly and serenely as though no evil were to be done.

"Are you ready?" asked hang-dog.

"All ready."

"Then here goes! *One—two——*"

At the word *two*, a quick, sharp crack broke upon the air. Lodman had pulled his trigger, and the cap had exploded without discharging his pistol. That was the way in which he generally "killed his man."

At the word "*three*" Edgar fired into the air.

"Fool!" uttered Burt, "why didn't you shoot him? You had him fast enough?"

"I would not murder an unarmed man!" And then turning to his antagonist, he asked—

"Do you fire at the word '*two*?'"

"I fire as suits me best," replied the blackleg, drawing another pistol. "We'll see if this one is not more sure."

"Stop!" cried Belfour, in agony. "You've stood before him once, and spared him when you might have shot him! Let me take the pistol now!"

"No," spoke Edgar, calmly. "*The villain has taught me a lesson!*" And as he said this he cocked his second pistol, and took his stand.

"Ready?" asked hang-dog.

'Then look out. Now! *One——*"

But he counted no further, for, as the words fell from his lips, the report of Edgar's pistol broke upon the still air, and the dark villain reeled to the deck shot through the brain!

"And *I* fire as suits *me* best!" the young clerk said, as he turned from the scene.

Even the two friends whom Lodman had brought on board saw the fairness of the thing, and they raised not a murmur. They took up the corse of the dead duelist and bore it away to the forecastle, where they rolled it up in a tarpaulin, intending to have it buried when they reached Mobile.

"Here," said Edgar Romney, as he handed to William Balfour all the money the latter had lost. There was a sad look upon his pale features, and his voice trembled. "Take this, and then exchange pledges with me. Say that you will never gamble again, and I'll promise you never to fight another duel!"

The pledge was given.

"I am glad you have taken such a pledge," said Burt; "but be sure there are hundreds who will bless the moment that led you to your first and, I hope, last duel."

ACTIVE WOMEN.

As a rule it may be remarked, that noisy women do much less than they seem to do, and quiet women often do more. But it does not follow that all quiet women are active; on the contrary, six out of ten are indolent, and work only on compulsion. Indolent women have their good points, and one of the most valuable of these is their quietness. It is a great luxury in domestic life; but perhaps it is a luxury which is too expensive for a poor man, unless he can get it combined with activity. The wife of a poor man, no matter what his profession or position, ought to be active in the best sense of the word. She ought to rule her house with diligence, but make no boast of it. Her managing powers ought to be confined to her own house, and never be sent out to interfere with her neighbors'. Her activity should be kept healthy, by being exercised upon important matters chiefly, though the trifles must not be disregarded. A woman who will make herself unhappy because the usual custom of cleaning the house on Friday is, on a particular occasion, inevitably infringed, is inadequate to perceive the difference between the lesser and the greater. Some active women, who pride themselves on their housekeeping, seem to forget that the object of keeping a house is, that human beings may be accommodated in it; their sole idea seems to be this, that the object of keeping a house is that the house may be kept in a certain form and order, and to the maintenance of this form and order they sacrifice the comfort the house was established to secure. Such active women are pests to society, because they want sense to direct and control their energies.

THE HORSE.

The noblest conquest which man has ever made is that of this proud and fiery animal, which shares with him the fatigue of war and the glory of battle: no less intrepid than his master, the horse sees peril and confronts it; he inures himself to the sound of arms, he revels in it, he seeks it, and kindles with the same fire; he likewise participates in his pleasures: at the chase, the tournament, the race-course, he shines, he glitters; but, quite as docile as he is brave, he does not suffer his mettle to overcome him, but knows how to subdue his impulse; not only does he bend to the hand that directs him, but he seems to consult its desires, and, ever obedient to the impressions he receives from it, he starts, slackens his pace, or stands still, and acts but to satisfy it. He is a creature that renounces his own being, to exist solely by another's will—that even knows how to anticipate it—that, by the speed and precision of his action, expresses and accomplishes it; that feels as much as we desire, and does but what we wish; that, giving himself up unreservedly, never rebels against any duty, serves with all his might, becomes thoroughly spent, and even dies, the better to obey.

PRUDENCE.

The great end of prudence is to give cheerfulness to those hours which splendor cannot gild, and exclamation cannot exhilarate. Those soft intervals of unbended amusement in which a man shrinks to his natural dimensions, and throws aside the ornaments or disguises which he feels, in privacy, to be useless incumbrances, and to lose all effect when they become familiar. To be happy at home is the ultimate result of all ambition—the end to which every enterprise and labor tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution. It is indeed at home that every man must be known, by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honor and fictitious benevolence.

Death of a Great Man.—When a great man dies, then has the time come for putting us in mind that he was alive. Biographies, sketches, criticisms, characters, anecdotes, reminiscences, issue forth as from opened springing fountains; the world, with a passion whetted by impossibility, will yet awhile retain, yet awhile speak with, though only to the unanswering echoes, what it has lost without remedy; thus is the last event of life often the loudest; and real spiritual apparitions (who have been named men), as false, imaginary ones are fabled to do, vanish in thunder.

MEN OF BUSINESS—THE MART.

BY AUGUSTA MOORE.

What self-sufficient creatures they are! how brisk and curt in all their ways—how busy, how important!

Standing in the midst of the busy mart, how hard it is to realize that these loud-voiced, eager trafficers—these bearded, heavy-booted, thick-coated, and rough-handed men are the very same beings that were last night clasped in the soft arms of women and children, and that were almost as gentle, tender-hearted and loving as they that clung to them!

See them, hear them—why, a woman is almost afraid of her own husband or brother. She grows bewildered, and begins to wonder if it be indeed true that she ever had that sturdy, resolute, hard-faced fellow by her side, or at her feet, talking kindly, smiling lovingly on her; or ever had him in a low chair before her, submitting patiently to all the pulls and jerks necessary, in order that she might properly arrange his hair.

A man may be pretty certain of at least transient reverence from his wife, if he will just allow her to see him in the full prestige of his business career. To her eye he will then appear an object of respect and awe, even though she may *know* that he is unable to distinguish between the coffee-pot or the tea-kettle, or between a table-cloth and a sheet.

With what a mighty stride the business man walks! Head up—hands full of papers, letters, or bank-notes—eyes full of shrewd and steely light—heart full of stock, banks, merchandize!

Three o'clock draws near—that often fatal three! and the impetus and eagerness grow fearful. Hinder not the man of business now—not for life or love's sake! Clear the track—give him his way, or expect no mercy. He seems as if he would walk over death itself, and go rough-shod through eternity, with that tramp of his. Don't *you* get in his path!—wife though you may be, or sister, or mother. He is rampant now—hinder him not.

But all these strong, proud, and eager men *are stopped and humbled easier than women are.*

Woman knows how to wave and bow to sickness, and to work and smile on just the same as ever; hiding, or laughing at, her pain and slow decay. But these lusty men, touch them once with pain and their hurry is over, their lofty air and important feeling is gone. Like the worm on the apple-tree when the fire of the torch touches it, they collapse and shrivel at once, or fall helplessly to the earth, and lie forlorn, if there be not true women's arms to catch, true women's bosoms to hold them.

A sick man—a sick business man, who has all his days been driving a full team through the world—what is more wretched?

Unless he have always conducted his business as an agent of the Lord God, and so held himself in readiness at any time to give it up, he is the most pitiable of men, and the hardest to manage.

Strange it is, that while driving on at such a headlong rate men so seldom think how surely they are hastening to the sick bed and the grave. *Strange* that they do not lay their plans and shape their business so that it may not be a crushing burden in their breasts, and on their consciences, when they are stretched for the last upon the couch from which they shall be "borne of four."

COMFORTABLE PEOPLE.

Comfortable people are comfortably and seasonably dressed. You will never have to shiver at the sight of their muslins in November, or lament over their velvets in the dust and heat of June. Nor will the season of life be less regarded by them than the season of the year: the comfortable elderly gentleman will not ape the fashion of the youthful fop, nor comfortable grandmothers excite the pity or ridicule of their descendants by emulating the charms and tresses of fifteen, in auburn wigs and roses. Good, simple, and well-fitting, in every sense of the term—the costume of comfortable people shows that, as they are not ashamed of their age, their age will have no reason to be ashamed of them.

Comfortable people will have comfortable things about them: their furniture and household appointments being ever the reverse of what is stigmatized as "gim-crack." You may lean back against their chairs, or lean forward on their tables, and neither will "give way" though you do. Their sofas, if not of the very newest fashion, are infinitely preferable to any invented either before or since—their grates draw to admiration—their fenders are just the right make and hight for putting one's feet on; and, although from a very early period of your acquaintance you have an inward consciousness that you might stir their fire unblamed, your remembrance of the fire of comfortable people for seven times seven years is connected with the conviction that no poke of yours could ever have improved it. One remarkable characteristic in the apartments of comfortable people is, that they always appear larger, in proportion to their actual dimensions, than those of others. You have room to breathe and room to move, and are never obliged to tumble over half a dozen things you do not want, in your progress towards what you do, as has so often happened to you in houses double the size of theirs. Then, too, there is such an exhilarating, wholesome atmosphere in rooms that are regularly and discreetly ventilated, and in which nothing rusty, musty, or fusty, is suffered to abide.

THE RULING PROPENSITY.

Success in the allotted or chosen walk of life is the passion, the ruling propensity, in every condition of society. And it is as potent in the cottage as in the mansion—the studio of the author and artist as the office of the merchant—the theatre of pleasure as the sanctuary of prayer. It is, in short, the motive power that creates and holds together nations, strengthens the bonds that maintain communities in subjection to law and order, gives a stimulus to the functions of the brain, and imparts consistency and usefulness to the natural selfishness of every human creature. It is the presiding genius of labor in all its branches, and in both its aggregate and individual efforts tenaciously strives to compel the phantoms that dazzle the imagination to give place to those realities which tempt both body and soul to take some path or another that will ultimately lead to the promised land—the glittering, fruitful, and luscious Canaan of our respective every-day longings. This, in general terms, is the condition symbolized as prosperity; and to the acquisition of which, in all its varied forms, mankind apply themselves with marvelous devotion.

Excellence.—"Excellence," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "is never granted to man but as the reward of labor. It argues, indeed, no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving these advantages, which, like the hands of a clock, whilst they make steady approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation."

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WASHINGTON'S BIRTH-DAY.

The Twenty-Second Day of February draws near, bringing its host of beautiful and glorious memories. It will mark the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of the birth of one who, though dead in the flesh, lives proudly in the heart of a Republic which his wisdom and valor, under God, aided so much to establish, and in the purest admiration ever decreed by the world to the memory of mortal man. It is one hundred and twenty-six years since George Washington was born, in the county of Westmoreland, Virginia, and fifty-nine years, the 14th of December last, since he expired at Mount Vernon, Virginia, crowned with a halo of glory and grief, the brightest in Fame's Pantheon.

The recurrence of the day ought to be a spell, cast upon the agitated and discordant elements of the Republic. It comes in the midst of scenes and tempests already threatening to sunder and shiver this glorious Union, which the genius and patriotism of Washington labored and prayed for to the last hour of his life, and over which, from his death-bed, he uttered his benison and invoked the blessing of God. Washington, the "Father of his Country," so palpably singled out by Providence to be the Champion of Freedom in the New World, lived from the moment he entered upon the field of public action, for but one purpose, and to but one end, the independence and confederation of those Colonies which chose him for their leader, and on whose altar, for liberty or death, he cast his fortune and his life.

Would that on this day every Representative in Congress, every Politician, every Fanatic, and every American might be drawn to the perusal of that Farewell Address, in which Washington marked out a chart for the Republic, pointing to every possible danger before it, and invoking his countrymen to caution, concession and union, as the means, and the only means of preserving, extending and beautifying for freedom the land and people which God blessed in their Revolution, and which, pursuing wise counsel, have to this day, in peace and in war, grown in prosperity, influence and power. Surely, if there is a feeling of patriotism left in the heart of the American people, this day should strike it with electric force, and the vibration should rise in a thunder-toned psalm of Union, "one and inseparable," now and forever! Let us reflect this day, with the memory of Washington fragrant in every thought, how this Union was wrought—what it has cost, and how much it has accomplished for us and for the world. Let us gather in spirit around the hallowed dust at Vernon, and take counsel with the spirit of Washington; it will be good for us; it will rekindle flagging patriotism, and cover fanaticism and treason with indignation and scorn.

Washington's birth-day! Why do we hallow and revere it? The sun may not smile more pleasantly, nor the air be balmier; the voices of nature are only harmonious and beautiful as ever; it is not the flowing hours, but the associations they inspire and recall, the examples they remind us of and the lessons they bid us consider, which make this day a great foot-print in the sands of time, telling us where a wise and noble voyager—the father of his country—started on the course of life; and following that course of stately steps, we see the whole path by which he arose to be the foremost man in all the world, leading a nation to freedom, such as the ideal of Plato never conceived. And the voyager who guided a nation so successfully from infancy to manhood, whose counsel never failed, while living, in wisdom and truth, shall not his words of advice and entreaty, uttered when his judgment was ripest and his vision clearest, have deeper weight now that only his immortal spirit is left to us? Can we enshrine Washington in our hearts, when we have ceased to venerate his memory, and have [illegible] his counsels and prayers in the dust—trampled them, perhaps, in suicidal and fratricidal blood?

Let us pause and reflect. The name of Washington is linked with the name of the Union. Dissever the one, and we may no longer invoke the other. The spirit of Washington can never smile on the fragments of the Union, nor will a just God bless a discordant sundering of the fabric created and consecrated by the valor and patriotism of our fathers. To revere Washington, we must revere the Union. Treading on the Union, we tread on every monument and association dedicated to Washington. What, with a riven Union, will be the significance of that trophy now rising near the capitol—that monument looking down upon Baltimore—that pyramidal pile towering over Bunker Hill? Will they be longer monuments to the father of his country, or to the freedom for which he reared a home? Alas! Washington *had* a country, and was revered as its father, but with a riven Union that country is no more. It will live only in the memory of the future, an accursing and accusing phantom, its freedom lost, the spirit of its father and the blessing of God withdrawn, and all its temples, trophies and altars, only so many broken emblems of the folly and madness of a people who would make no sacrifice but that of their country!

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CLASS LEGISLATION.

A large per centage of the laws on our statute books are the fruit of class legislation—that is, they are laws passed at the instigation and for the benefit of a few. Many of these laws never were, and never will be, heard of by the people at large. Beyond serving a petty special purpose, they are dead statutes—cumbering and confusing the code. But although class legislation is the parent of a multitude of laws that are idle and obsolete, so far as the great public is concerned, it is also the father of many living, active laws—laws that are a hindrance of the common weal.

If one will watch a session of any State Legislature, or of Congress even, he will soon perceive that our law-makers do not always act from their own conviction of public need, but are influenced by special agencies. There is no doubt at all among the "knowing ones" about this. It is well understood, whether it be called corruption or by some gentler name, that an outside, self-elected legislature, called "The Lobby," frames our most important acts of legislation. The "lobby," or "power behind the throne greater than the throne itself," is become absolutely a part of our government—state and national—and as it represents narrow, property or partizan interests, the legislation it effects is, of course, class legislation. The late revelation touching a well-known mercantile and manufacturing firm, as having expended nearly a hundred thousand dollars to carry the last Tariff modification through Congress, is a specimen of the magnitude of the "lobby" in class legislation. The secret history of Congress in relation to Ocean Steam Navigation, and land-grants for railroad purposes, could reveal the wealth and power of the lobby in still greater magnitude.

Privileged classes, in this country as in some other lands, are constantly seeking, and not unsuccessfully, to add to their privileges. Elected legislators are becoming more and more merely nominal law-makers—the "lobby" is the real enacting power. Such is the sagacity of the lobby, that it moves the largest bodies with ease. It understands the final secret of power, as well as did the Macedonian who subdued the otherwise unsubduable Demosthenes, with a golden cup. Shameful as it may appear, promise and hope of office shape much of our legislation, but direct pecuniary considerations shape more. The principle is so well established, that monied men waste no time in *supplication* for statutes—they club their money and buy up the law-making power. They find this the quickest and cheapest method. There are many corporate and class interests in our own State that, laid bare, would prove more than we have affirmed.

The cry of corruption raised by parties out of power against parties in power, and against each succeeding Congress and Legislature, is unfortunately too well founded. But the cry brings no reform. *New political successions repeat the practices of their predecessors.* Remedy seems hopeless, and honest men can only repeat the maxim of Jefferson, that "the best government is that which governs least."

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NIGHT SCHOOLING.

It may not be known, to all of our city readers even, that night schools are provided in New York, as in pioneering New England and elsewhere, during the cooler months, for such as cannot attend the free schools during the day.

It is one of the most gratifying things we know of, to visit one of these night schools, or "evening schools," as we believe they are more commonly designated, and observe the classes therein, with particular reference to their personal composition. There you will find, seated side by side, the boy of ten years, clad in rags, and the full-grown man in whole broadcloth. The one has slipped in under the cover of the darkness, because ashamed to attend during day-light; the other is there in the evening, because the toils of the day forbid his attendance at other times. Perhaps he is the head of a family, whose children attend at the self-same school-house during the day sessions.

On a recent occasion, when we took a glimpse of one of these evening schools—a glimpse, instead of a more thorough inspection, only because of a want of time—we found a man of the last-mentioned description in attendance. His case excited in us the liveliest interest. We could not help thinking how much wiser he was in spending his evenings thus than in loafing at some corner grocery, or doing worse at some drinking saloon! His motto evidently is, "Never too late to learn," the truth of which the history of hundreds of adult seekers of "knowledge under difficulties" has proved, to their own honor and the benefit of the world.

◆

"SMALL TALK."

There is an old Asiatic tradition which would seem to account for the generally admitted fact that men indulge in "small talk" less than women, as a general rule. It states that a dozen baskets of "small talk" were strewn from Heaven in the garden of Eden. Adam, being less curious or less enterprising than Eve, only gathered three baskets, while she gathered nine.

"Small talk" is proper enough in time and place, and serves a good purpose in the social economies. It is only when out of time or out of place that we object to it. That it frequently encounters one or both of these objections, no social observer could have failed to conclude. It is far too apt to monopolize the entire time in social gatherings, to the exclusion of all that is sensible or instructive, and thus to become a bore and a nuisance!

The tendency of this is to drive sensible and intelligent people from the social circle, and leave it to the care and keeping of the frivolous and the ignorant!

◆

A Good Move.—We are gratified to observe that the leading clergymen of our city are taking measures to secure a better observance of the Sabbath in our midst. The admirable resolutions recently reported by a committee of their number, consisting of Rev. Drs. Potts, Williams, Hawks, Hutton, Smith and Peck, have met with very general approbation from the respectable as well as the religious portion of the community. One of these resolutions is embodied in an article in another column on "The Civil Value of the Sabbath."

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

STREET THOUGHTS.

Unexhausted, inexhaustible New York! fertile in fun and filth; kaleidoscoping every minute a hundred phases of human life, with its joys and its agonies; giving as little heed to the smiles of the one as the tears of the other; swallowing up thy thousands by omnibuses, cars and ferries, only to replace them by other thousands who pass away as before. Who stops to heed? Each one knows that his death, from out that seething mass of humanity, would be but as a leaf on the stream, which is bearing us on so surely to that far distant shore whence there is no return voyage. But we close our ears to its rush and drift on; not all thoughtlessly; not all unmindful of the heart histories written on the tightly compressed lip, and anxious eye, and knotted brow beside us; not all without a heart-pang that there should pass us that woman, from whose eyes the pure light of Heaven has forever fled. Not all ungrieved that he who has slept on a holy mother's breast should not hesitate for the memory of her, ere he pushes over the precipice the feeble one whom the voices of his manhood should clamor to him to save. Not all careless that they whose motto is—For God and the right, should wield such clumsy and unskillful weapons. Not all careless that he who started in the race with the clear brow upon which all men might look—upon clean hands which honesty delighted to grasp—should wind and turn like the hare, and spring at last to the goal panting only with his own belittling aims and selfish passions—with only the tatters of patriotism hanging about him. Not all ungrieved that so many of the mothers in the land should let the sweet altar fire of home die out, that the funeral pyre of their children's happiness may glare upon the dazzled eye of the multitude. Not all ungrieved that sixteen years of the city lad's life should have exhausted its powers. Not all ungrieved that a husband may blush to love to stay in his home, but not stealthily to disgrace it.

Not that there are no Lots in this brilliant Sodom; not—blessed be God—that there are not happy homes in it, where no modern blight has ever come; where the happy wife is content to sit, as in the olden time, "making auld claes look maist as weel as new;" where the husband, in his slippered feet and easy-chair, reads and smiles at the bright faces around him, caring not to join the jaded pleasure-seekers in chasing what he knows will always elude their grasp. Not that some faces in this brilliant Sodom never shine with the light of high and holy deeds; not that lips never mention God's name reverently; not that there are no children here who never turned disgusted away from parents who preach one thing and practice another. All this we know—all this we have seen; but oh! how small a band are these! It still remains that our young people are too old, and that our old people are not sufficiently young—that the latter seldom or never mingle their sympathies with the former; that parents are content to feed, clothe and house their children, and that children are of course content with *external* service, and not always that. And this, I cannot but think, is the soil from which all these modern vices spring; this is why the daughter takes so lightly upon her lips the vow that releases her ~~from parental bondage; this is why we hear of~~ dissipated sons; this is why many a white head bows with agony, that might have been crowned by the hand of filial love; this is why we have atheism in its most revolting forms, and this is why too late, from so many pale lips, goes forth the despairing cry—Would to God I could die for thee, my child—my child!

And still the petty strife of life goes on, and I stand amid the seething, swaying mass, a mite, looking off upon the boundless, limitless sea which swallows up the sky; seeing the dismantled wrecks; looking with loving compassion upon the little bark making its first essay; trembling as I think of the treacherous rocks and quicksands, the wild winds, the wilder storms and the hungry sea; trembling for myself, looking ever fearfully about me, lest the only Arm that can save be not around my fearful heart.

Fanny Fern.

◆

NOW!

Significant monosyllable that, but how little appreciated! Whether we conclude that it is a fault of our first nature, (which no one will have the hardihood to do), or of our "second nature," as habit has not inaptly been called, certain it is that there is a tendency in mankind to postpone till to-morrow what should be done to-day. The sacred writings, especially the book of Proverbs, afford abundant evidence that this was the case when their injunctions were delivered, and modern moralists have made procrastination an earnest theme. The pious Dr. Young has pronounced that

> "Procrastination is the thief of time;
> Man resolves, and re-resolves, and dies the same.

Here, then, we see the importance of Now—the "everlasting Now," as Crowley calls it, where he proclaims that

> "Nothing there is to come, and nothing past,
> But an eternal Now does ever last."

This is the feeling that should ever be cherished by the young. It would teach them the value of time, and the solemnity of the present as well—the Now of which they can alone feel certain, as mortals. As such they have no to-morrow. Sufficient for each day is its own work, as well as the evil thereof. Procrastination is the worst possible folly. The time to act is now.

Let our young readers be satisfied fully of this in time—that is, *now*.

◆

A NOBLE WORK.

The idea of furnishing country homes for the workless people of the great, overcrowded cities, is a comparatively new one. The old idea was almsgiving. This is practiced far too much still, because of the narrow and short-sighted views of some givers, and the selfishness of others. We say selfishness, because nothing but selfishness could dictate the bestowal of money upon beggars, because of its being a time-saving process. And who has not heard the apology for giving, without inquiry into their actual condition, that it was "*cheaper* to give a shilling or two, in order to get rid of importunity, and save time?"

How much wiser and more humane the plan now in vogue, of procuring employment for the unemployed, when they are tied down to the city by large families, and of sending them to the West, when unincumbered. It saves to them their self-respect, which the reception of alms always destroys, more or less. And this is an important result. When once self-respect gives way, there is no safety to moral character.

In this view, the efforts for the procurement of rural homes for the young of both sexes referred to—for young women as well as for boys—is deserving of all praise. By *helping the deserving to help themselves*, they are doing a noble work for suffering humanity.

LET THE SOUL ASSERT ITSELF.

There are no divinities among us. The most finely-touched spirit in our midst is only a spark of the Divine, struggling up to its source through the opaque wrappings of mortality. Our prelates are human, and our prophets are fallible. The most they can give us is here and there a glimpse and a suggestion; for the rest we must lift up our eyes and stretch forth our hands, standing fast by the oracles of God and the voice within us.

But we have fallen upon days of audacity and assumption. Grave doctors roll up their ethical, æsthetical and theological pills, and sagely count them out—so many sugar-coated, blue, and belladonna to be taken every hour till thoroughly indoctrinated. To make answer: "I have meat that ye know not of," or, "I see a light yonder," is rank heresy. If they cannot dispel the illusion with any crow-bar of logic, or battering-ram of rhetoric, we are given over to the father of lies with an unctious anathema.

To what purpose, then, are our strong instincts and full-voiced souls? We go forth with our destinies in our hands. It is not Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas we seek, but an answer from the Infinite without to the cry of the infinite within.

No man of true magnanimity will use the prestige of his genius, the magnetism of his personality, nor even the fine threads of intuition and prophecy, to compel another from his convictions. To a great, reliant soul there is something pitiable in the sight of a personality borne away and merged by a power that it does not acknowledge, yet cannot resist.

There hath been appointed under heaven, no moral, intellectual, or religious monarchy. The new-born babe is a self-assertor, in spite of swathing bands. The blue-eyed boy of six summers will startle the deepest philosopher with his innocent questioning, and sometimes leap at once to the solution of a problem, which the most sapient research had failed to compass.

Every home should be the fostering-place of those qualities which make self-sustained men and women; but it is too often a kind of mint, whose copper, silver and gold coin are all stamped alike with the ancestral arms. Away with the mummery of hereditary opinion—political, religious, or any other! To fasten the faith of a developing soul to the skirts of your own creed, is a wrong to that soul, to yourself, and to your creed. Sooner or later, the knowledge will come to him that your light is his darkness. The heavens have not opened to him; he has been walking blindly in your footsteps, with no revelation. The rays of the Godhead may stream upon your upturned gaze, but his eyes follow the trail of your garments; he sees no glory—hears no "well-beloved"—feels no inspiration; and, at last, enfeebled with spiritual vassalage, and disheartened by the gloom, he loosens his hold, and is tossed about helplessly. Let the glow of your faith and the might of your prayers surround such a soul like an atmosphere; but wait patiently till it thrills to the still voice of the Revealer.

And ye weary-hearted—vexed and bewildered with the counter-teachings of good and evil spirits, who come alike with white wings and soft-pleading whispers, pointing diverse ways to truth; ye misguided, with the demon of unbelief crouching darkly and heavily upon the beautiful faith of your childhood; ye self-distrustful—despising the oracle within, so unblessed of the oracle without—be silent! O, be silent! and the voice of the outer Jove shall stir the soul of the inner Jove to a glad "Eureka!"

Mary Forrest.

◆

CIVIL VALUE OF THE SABBATH.

The day of holy rest, to a land bearing the Christian name, and to a Republic based on equal rights, has the highest Civil Worth. Man needs it, *physically*, as a season when Labor may wipe off its grime, and breathe more freely after the week's exhaustion, and when Care shall slacken its hold upon the frame and the heart. Man needs it, *morally*, to rise by its aid out of engrossing secularities and materialism to the remembrance of his spiritual interests, his final account, and his eternal destiny. *Toil* needs it to rescue its share of rest, and its season of devotion from the absorbing despotism of Capital; and *Capital* needs it to shield its own accumulations from the recklessness and anarchy of an imbruted and desperate proletariate, and to keep its own humanity and conscientiousness alive. The *State* needs it, as a safeguard of the public order, quiet and virtue; human laws becoming, however wise in form, effete in practice, except as they are based upon conscience and upon the sanctions of Eternity, as recognized voluntarily by an intelligent people; and God's day cultivating the one and reminding us of the other. And in a *Republic* more especially, whose liberties, under God, inhere in its virtues, the recognition—freely and devoutly—by an instructed nation—of God's paramount rights is the moral underpinning requisite to sustain the superstructure of man's rights; and without such support from religion—not as nationally established, but as personally and freely accepted—all human freedom finally molders and topples into irretrievable ruin.

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"TURN OUT THE SAINTS."

The Calcutta correspondent of the London Times, writing of the death of the lamented General Havelock, says:

> "He was, perhaps, the bravest man in his army, and was never so chatty or agreeable as under fire. He was a Christian of the old stamp—a strong God-fearing Puritan man, who deemed it no shame to teach his soldiers to pray. 'Turn out the saints,' said Lord Gough, on one occasion, when he anticipated desperate work: 'Havelock never blunders, and his men are never drunk.'"

This is an unconscious but striking compliment to "God-fearing Puritanism," to "Christianity of the old stamp." In whatever situation he is placed, the good man is the man to be most trusted. Whatever his *duty* is, *that* he will perform. It has always been so, and so it ever will be.

◆

A HAPPY RETORT.

A few days since, during the trial of a case of assault and battery in the Superior Court in this city, a lawyer, who is fond of quoting Latin, used the expression, "Nihil fit;" whereupon his witty opponent, assuming a grave and indignant expression of countenance, said to the jury that as "Nihil" was not a party to the action, either as the assaulter or the assaulted, it made no difference whether he "fit" or not, or where, or when, or for what purpose, or with whom, he fought. This happy "turn" threw the judge, jury and spectators into a fit of hearty laughter, and so disconcerted the quoter of foreign tongues that he could not even make use of his own.

◆

Objection to Travel by Night.—When a New Zealander travels by night, if the ideas of his forefathers have not lost their power over his mind, he will carry in his hand a cooked potato, to prevent his being assailed by evil spirits (kei pokea e te tupapaku), who are believed to be more mischievous then than by day, but have a great repugnance to come in contact with food of any sort, or any place where it is kept.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

Advice is almost the only commodity which the world is lavish in bestowing, and scrupulous in receiving, although it may be had gratis, with an allowance to those who take a quantity. We seldom take it until too late, and still more rarely while there is yet time to profit by it. Great tact and delicacy are required either in conferring or seeking this perilous boon, for, where people do not take your counsel, they generally take offence; and, even where they do, you can never be sure that you have not given pain in giving advice.

Ablution is a duty somewhat too strictly inculcated in the Mohometan ritual, and often too laxly observed in Christian practice. As a man may have a dirty body, and an undefiled mind, so may he have clean hands in a literal and not in a metaphorical sense. All washes and cosmetics without, he may yet have a moral hydrophobia within. Pleasant to see an im-puritan of this stamp holding his nose lest the wind should come between an honest scavenger and his gentility, while his own character stinks in the public nostrils.

In a late speech before the Canadian House of Assembly, the Hon. Provincial Secretary incidentally remarked that a friend had just given him a graphic account of his travels in the muddy county of Guysborough.—"He was waddling through the mud, and seeing a hat in his way, stooped to pick it up, when lo! a head was disclosed to view; seizing hold of the head, he was startled with the exclamation of 'Stop! stop! be careful what you're about, there's a horse under me.'"

It is a very pleasant and proper thing, no doubt, to have a *purpose*, but happy is the man who can indulge in the luxury, now and then, of having none at all; who can give over, at intervals, the steeple-chase of the world, and have a heart-holiday—pass his hand across his brow and wipe out the wrinkles, and so reverse life's engine and be a boy again.

Self-absolution is generally pronouncing our own pardon. We can generally reconcile ourselves, partially at least, to our own crimes and infamy. This power of the human mind has its uses, for the stings of conscience would be intolerable could we not steal some little relief from self-delusion.

A respectable gentleman, whom we used to know in the East as a remarkably modest and even timid youth, has set up pretensions in the South as a regular duelist. We never suspected that he had the slightest taste for saltpetre—unless in the beef-barrel.

"How old are you?" said a judge to a German arraigned before him. "I am *dirty*." "And how old is your wife?" "Mine wife is *dirty-two*." "Then, sir, you are a very filthy couple, and I wish to have nothing further to do with either of you."

A drunken sailor walked out upon a railroad with two women. The locomotive came along, and, as if for the accommodation of the women, divided him into two equal parts.

An absurdity is anything advanced by our opponents contrary to our own opinion or practice, or above our apprehension—and therefore a term very liberally used, it being applied in exact proportion to our ignorance.

It is said some babies are so small that they can creep into quart measures. But the way in which some adults can walk into such measures is astonishing.

"My speech is undergoing publication," said a member of one of our Legislatures the other day. We wonder if anybody is likely to undergo its perusal.

"I am afraid, dear wife, that, while I am gone, absence will conquer love." "Oh, never fear, dear husband, the longer you stay away the better I shall like you."

The good people of Muscatine have a Dime society. Unless it is worth more than some societies we know of, it is unworthy of its name.

"I repeat," said a person of questionable veracity, "that I am an honest man." "Yes—and how often will you have to repeat it before you believe it yourself?"

"I have an idea in my head," said a noodle to his companion. "Have you? Then *keep it there*—it may be some time before you get another."

We saw a drunken man lately trying to get a watchman to arrest his own shadow. His complaint was that an ill-looking scoundrel kept following him.

Why are crows the most sensible of birds?—Because they never complain without *caws*.

◆

CURRENT ITEMS.

As the Portuguese barque San Pedro was crossing the Gulf of Mexico, a few weeks since, when near the harbor of Havana, one of the sailors fell overboard, and before a boat could be lowered to his assistance he was devoured by a couple of sharks. One of them first bit off the unfortunate man's legs, when he uttered such terrific shrieks as nearly paralyzed the energies of those coming to his assistance, and soon after the other shark bit him in two, and thus ended his agony.

A Lyons (France) paper says that the tiger of a menagerie in that city got loose from his cage one night, and the next morning attacked the keeper as he entered the pavilion. The terrified man ran to the elephant for protection, and the sagacious creature, placing the keeper on his back, defended him from the tiger, until sufficient assistance came to secure the blood-thirsty brute.

The late attempt to assassinate Louis Napoleon, whereby sixty people were killed and wounded and the Emperor's hat slit in twain, has so frightened his imperial majesty and the Empress Eugenie, that they live in a state of constant terror. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown—especially in France.

The jurymen of this city have been true enough to the obligations of their oaths for some time past, to bring against murderers a verdict of "guilty," and the same may be said of jurymen in other parts of the country. Should they continue thus faithfully to discharge their duty, we may hope for a decrease of this horrid crime.

It is stated by parties who are supposed to know all about the matter, that within the last fifteen years over two millions of dollars have been expended in getting sundry bills passed by Congress. This may account for the fact that many members of Congress have accumulated large fortunes within that time.

It is stated that a bill is soon to be introduced in our Legislature for the abolishment of all laws for the collection of debts in this State. There has been much talk about such a law for years past, but it can never be enacted by sane men.

A detachment of the United States soldiers in the Utah expedition had fine sport, not long since, in exterminating a sort of grizzly bear community, consisting of over twenty members. The bears fought well, but they could not withstand the terrible volleys of the troops.

Solomon Barrow, of Texas, was not long since poisoned by a handsome mulatto slave-girl living in his family. On reading his will, it was discovered that he had provided for this very girl's being set at liberty after his decease, and had also left her a bequest of $500.

It is reported that the celebrated Texan Ranger, Colonel Jack Hays, has been taken prisoner by Brigham Young, who holds him as a hostage on whom to wreak his vengeance, in case any of his "Mormon children" are ill-treated by the officers of the United Sates.

A couple of gamesters on a Mississippi steamer recently got into a fight over their cards, and mangled each other horribly, one having an eye gouged out, and the other the fingers of his left hand shot off. No one interfered, as it was hoped they would kill each other.

James Coaden, a boy nine years of age, the son of a widow living in Pacific street, Brooklyn, slipped and rolled down the cellar stairs of his mother's residence a few evenings since, whereby he was so severely injured that he died in a few hours.

It is understood that the Mayor is about to break up all the "gift enterprizes" in this city. We hope the report is true, as the people, and especially those living at a distance, have been swindled enough by these concerns.

Mrs. Margaret Lyons, of Chicago, recently committed suicide on account of her reputation having been severely attacked during a trial in a court of justice in that city.

Some of the farmers in the southern part of Ohio have for some weeks been making maple sugar. Such a thing as making maple sugar in February was never before known.

It has been decided in the Circuit Court of Kings County that lager bier is not an "intoxicating beverage."

A bill preventing the marriage of first cousins in that State, has been passed by the Legislature of Kentucky.

SONG OF THE PINE TREE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Ah! I know that I have a deep, sorrowful tone,
Heard from me in the wide-waving forest alone;
For 'tis mine in the mournful, mild stir of each leaf
But to sing all the while of Humanity's grief.

When the lover no more shall behold o'er the tomb
Of his dead one dark funeral cypress's gloom;
When the father no more folds his babe in its shroud,
While the mother beside him is wailing aloud;
When no more I shall see, as I tenderly wave,
Little feet walking softly around the lone grave;
When your friendship's no more but a heart-cheating word,
Like the voice of a demon in Paradise heard;
When the fierce hand of Murder shall paralyzed fall,
As he thinks, while he glides through the dark glen or hall,
Of the yew by Eve strewn o'er the first victim's pall;
When Ambition, who looks but to Liberty's God
For his wreath, is no longer crushed down in the sod ·
When the world shall a mighty cathedral be seen,
Where all nations together in brotherhood lean—
Then I know that forever no more shall the Pine
Stir a Century's beard with her sorrowful strain,
But the Beeches and Sycamores' whisper "divine,
O, divine is the Earth, as in Eden, again!"

* * *

RICHARD HOFFMAN;

OR,

THE PEASANT AND THE NOBLEMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER XX.

MIKE AND FIDDLER DICK SWOP VICTIMS.

True to his promise, Fiddler Dick made his appearance on the appointed night at the cottage of his dear friend Mike. Bet and the child Fan accompanied him. The former was a woman of business, and came, as she said, to see that everything was square between the two pals, who neither of them, it seemed, could trust the other. A witness made all right, she thought.

The child was, as its taskmaster had described, in the last stage of consumption—that fatal disease which, like the canker in the bud, destroys the promise of many an opening flower. She was thin—miserably thin—and her dark, lustrous eyes appeared unnaturally large and bright from the contrast with her pale, emaciated features. In hight, and the color of her hair, there was a strong resemblance to Lillian, who gazed with wonder and pity on the poor shivering creature, as she crept to her side by the fire.

"I think that's the article you require," observed the mountebank, glancing significantly towards his victim.

Mike nodded in the affirmative.

"I'd great to do to persuade Bet to part with her, she is so fond of the kids—quite a mother to 'em. But, as I said, when I say done, I really means done, and——"

A violent fit of coughing from Fan interrupted the rest of his speech. The ruffian smiled.

"Do you hear that?" he said. "*Holler* as if a nail wor a-being driven into a coffin."

"And ain't her 'air and eyes the very thing?"

The convict confessed it would have been difficult to find a better match.

Whilst the two men and Bet were settling matters over the bottle, the two children made some approach to acquaintance. Lilly, who was still anxiously expecting Jack, asked the little sufferer if she was to remain with them.

"I don't know," answered the child, in a voice scarcely louder than a whisper. "I should like it, it is so warm here."

"Are you not warm at home?"

"Not since I have been sent to sleep in the wash-house."

Here a second fit of coughing disturbed the two ruffians at the table. Fan looked terrified, and vainly tried to suppress it.

"Can't you be quiet, cuss you?" exclaimed Fiddler Dick, shaking the whip, which he had not forgotten to bring with him, at her.

"I can't help it," gasped the child, "indeed I can't."

"I'll make ye, then."

Doubtless the ruffian would have executed his threat but for Mike, who prudently reminded him that, as he should be obliged to call in the parish doctor, it would not do for Fan to have any marks upon her.

"She is lucky," muttered the brute.

And the conversation was renewed.

"Does he often beat you?" inquired Lilly in an under tone.

"He beats us all in turn," was the reply.

There was something dreadful in the cold indifference with which the words were uttered, as if being beaten were quite a matter of course.

"And what does he beat you for?"

"I don't know—anything—when we don't dance to please him, or the gentlefolks don't give us any money."

"And do you dance?" demanded the astonished Lillian.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In the streets, upon stilts: there are four of us. *You'll know*," added the speaker, "for Jane heard him tell Bet about you."

"About me?"

"Yes, you're to be one of us."

The information put poor Lilly into a terrible fright. Unhappy as she found herself in the cottage alone with Mike, the change appeared worse, as the unknown generally does to children.

Bet having fully satisfied herself that everything was straight and fair between Fiddler Dick and his old friend, now approached the fireplace and directed the children to change clothes. Fan did not wait to be told a second time. So great was her dread of the virago, that had she been ordered to put her little hand between the bars of the burning grate, she would have scarcely resisted; Lillian, however, hesitated.

"Didn't you hear me?" exclaimed the woman, at the same time seizing her roughly, and beginning to unloosen her frock.

The orphan resisted.

"Ah, I see what you wants," added Bet, rising to fetch the whip.

"She will beat you," whispered Fan.

The terrified Lillian hastily began to remove her things, but her obedience came too late to save her from the fury of the half-drunken wretch. One severe lash of the whip seamed her ivory shoulder with a long red scar.

"I told you you'd get it," said her companion in misfortune.

Startled by the piercing shriek which followed the blow, the two men turned round.

"Stash it, Bet!" cried her husband, "*can't you wait?*"

"I ain't a-goin' to stand any of her nonsense," muttered the female fury, raising the whip a second time over the crouching victim.

"Stash it, I say," roared Fiddler Dick, starting from his chair, "or do yer want *me to use it?* Lay it down—you may look—I mean it."

The woman threw it upon the floor: she knew that the speaker could use it, and had no wish to put him to the proof.

"Come, come, no quarreling," observed Mike, in a conciliatory tone.

"What is she aggravating me for, then?"

"Well, well," said his host, "it is settled now. Lilly will be none the worse for a slight correction."

It must not be supposed that any sentiment of humanity had induced the mountebank to interfere; far from it: he was above such weakness; but the fact was, he had felt annoyed at not being allowed to vent his own ill-humor upon poor Fan, and did not like to see another indulge in a luxury he was debarred from

It was the first blow Lillian recollected to have ever received, and, independent of the pain, which was a severe one, shame and grief caused her to sob convulsively.

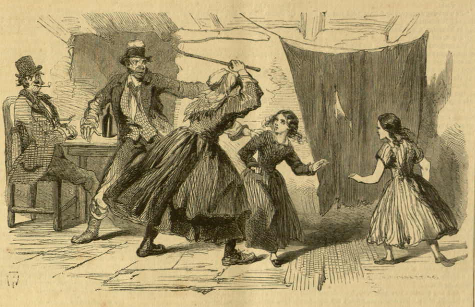
She had no Jack now to protect her.

There was something perfectly fiend-like in the looks with which Bet from time to time regarded her whilst changing her dress. Lillian shuddered at them, and well she might, for she had made a bitter enemy of one who henceforth would have the power as well as will to torment her. But her terror increased when Mike informed her that she was to accompany his visitors to their home, and the other child remain in her place.

Fan heard the announcement with considerable satisfaction; it was years since she had worn such a nice frock. She felt warm, and had no wish to return into the night air.

"Mind what Dick says," she whispered in the ear of the shuddering victim. "He's the best of the two. Good-bye."

Complaint and entreaty were alike useless; her late gaoler only laughed at her prayer to be allowed to remain till Jack returned. Poor Lilly! had he granted it, she would have remained long enough.


LILLIAN'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH HER NEW MISTRESS.

On the departure of his visitors, who took their new victim with them, the old convict, having secured the door of the cottage, mounted to the den where Fan was to sleep. His first care was to remove one of the scanty coverings from the bed; the next to push back the skylight directly over it.

"Every little will help," he thought, as he mentally calculated on the effect the keen night air would produce upon the delicate lungs of the dying child.

He had some idea of sprinkling the sheet with water, but having none at hand, postponed it till the next night.

Descending to the kitchen, he took the whip in his hand, and seating himself opposite to Fan, began drawing it playfully through his fingers.

The child regarded him uneasily.

"I ain't a-going to cough, sir," she said.

"I don't mind yer coughing," replied the brute. "In fact, I rather likes to hear it—it's so lonesome in this place."

Fan began to think it was very lonesome, and would have preferred the night air and the bed in the wash-house again.

"I want to talk to you, *Lilly*," added Mike.

"My name isn't Lilly."

"Isn't!" exclaimed the ruffian, with a fearful scowl. "I'll teach you that it is; and, if you say it is not, I'll cut the flesh off your bones. There ain't much on 'em. Now, what is yer name?"

"Lilly," faltered the little girl, her dilated eyes riveted on the whip.

The convict smiled. Fiddler Dick had told him rightly—there would be no occasion to use it: she knew the sight of it.

"And now, Lilly, remember that is yer name," continued Mike; "if you are good, I'll send for a doctor to cure you of that nasty cough."

The little sufferer did not exactly comprehend how she was to be cured; but she asked no questions: even curiosity, the first buds of childhood's intelligence, had withered in her young mind. Fear had destroyed them. She promised, faithfully promised to answer to no other name than that of Lilly; and, satisfied with having achieved so much, the old convict conducted her to her sleeping-place, and locked her in.

"She can't last very long," he muttered to himself, as he turned into his own comparatively comfortable bed; "and then I shall be a made man. Five hundred pounds! *I shall be a respectable man, then!* and no risk run; that is to say, no *great risk*."

It was some time before the man, whose longings for respectability were as impatient as his ideas of it were peculiar, could compose himself to sleep. Sometimes he thought of his nephew Jack, and the kind master he had provided him with; and wondered how he liked the sea. Then he recollected Lady Boothroyd and his brother, and chuckled under the bed-clothes at the pretty trick he was preparing to play them.

"Five hundred!" he repeated. "I'll have a thousand, at least, from each of 'em, afore I've done with 'em. They ain't a-goin' to do me, I can tell 'em. Cunning as they think themselves, they shall find Mike is a match for both."

With this reflection the old convict fell asleep, without one thought of the little sufferer he had so cruelly exposed to the night wind, which continued to whistle and moan through the loose tiles of the roof, sad as a dirge over an infant's grave.

Poor Lilly felt bitterly cold as she trudged through the streets by the side of Fiddler Dick and his wife, clad in the thin frock of Fanny. It was a long way from the Belvedere-road to Whitechapel; but though her feet ached and her limbs shivered, she did not dare to complain. The scowling looks of the woman, the harsh, coarse voice of the man, terrified her, and her tears trickled silently till the keen frost froze them on her pale cheek. A few hours since, and she considered no fate could be worse than hers; but now she thought with regret on the warm fire and the close air of the cottage, even though it was impregnated with the odors of tobacco and gin, which made her both sick and giddy.

At last her conductors stopped at a wretched-looking house in one of the narrow, dingy alleys in the neighborhood. Bet drew forth a key, and all three entered it. There was a blazing fire in the lower room, close to which three children about her own age were closely huddled. They had been ordered to keep it up till the return of their task-master.

Two of these children appeared sickly; but the third, a hardy, strong little creature, had the appearance af robust health.

It was her *first* winter; her companions had already passed one.

At the sight of Dick and his wife, all three drew back to make room for them, and remained with their eyes fixed inquiringly upon the new-comer.

"Here, Liz," said the man, addressing the healthy-looking child, "here is a companion for you."

The child looked pleased with her new acquaintance. It was something to vary the monotony of that lonely, dark abode.

"You won't see Fan any more," added Bet; "we have taken her home to her friends, and brought——"

"Silence, can't you?" muttered her husband. "What a tongue you have!"

The woman appeared dreadfully out of temper. It was the second time she had been reproved, and on the account of Lillian. As she dared not show her ill-humor to him, her wrath silently gathered till she could find an opportunity of expending it upon the innocent cause of her vexation.

Supper was got ready, and as Fiddler Dick happened to be in an uncommonly amiable humor—for he considered that he had made an excellent bargain—the children were permitted to seat themselves at table and join in the meal; but it seemed to afford them no pleasure beyond that of eating; the mirth, the freedom of childhood were absent. Not one of them could tell how long the unusual fit of kindness might last, and the coarse jest be exchanged for the kick or the blow.

"This is what I call comfortable," said the ruffian, as he made himself a glass of strong gin-and-water, and then passed the bottle to Bet; "ain't it, Lilly?"

The child thought of Jack, and made no answer.

"Why don't you speak?" he added, crossly.

"Because she's obstinate as a young donkey," replied the woman, striving to excite his anger against her: "but you're always a *spilin'* the gals."

The last observation betrayed the speaker's want of tact, for it drew the storm upon herself.

"And what is it to you if I does spile 'em?" exclaimed her husband; "they belongs to me, not you. She ain't used to us yet, that's all. She'll be reasonable enough—won't you, Lilly?"

"Yes, sir," faltered the orphan.

The man called her to him, looked into her face, passed his hand over her long silken locks, and declared, with a chuckle, that her eyes and *'air* wor the very model of his own.

"You must call me father," he added.

"Papa is dead," sobbed the orphan, giving way to her tears.

"And what was your papa, as you call him?" inquired Dick.

Lillian made the same answer she had given to Mike, when he questioned her upon the subject—

"She didn't know, but he used to wear a red coat with gold somethings, which she had forgotten the name of, on the shoulder."

"A common soldier!" roared Bet.

Fiddler Dick suspected that he must have been something more than a common soldier, but he kept his opinion to himself. He already felt quite satisfied that something more than the twenty pounds his old pal had promised him might be made out of the affair; at all events, he was resolved to try it.

When the children were ordered to their dens, for it would be a misnomer to call them beds, Liz ventured to ask where the new-comer was to be put to.

"In Fan's place in the wash-house, answered the woman, angrily, "and quite good enough for her, too."

"No, it ain't," said the man.

"I say it is," replied his wife, getting very red in the face.

The mountebank began to draw down the corners of his mouth, always a bad sign with him, and laying down his pipe stared Bet very hard in the face.

"What's up?" he asked; "you forget who's master; *must I just remind yer on it?*"

Bold as she naturally was, the woman could not endure the cold, serpent-like gaze of the speaker, who evidently meant all, if not more than his words implied.

"Take her with you, Liz," he added, patting Lillian on the cheek: "and mind you are both up early in the mornin' to exercise."

"Yes, master," replied the child.

"And everything ready for breakfast," said Bet.

"Yes, missis."

"Good night."

The children mechanically repeated the words and huddled out of the room. It was evidently a great relief to them to escape from the presence of their task-master.

"Well," muttered the man, as they disappeared, "she is uncommon like me; just my *'air*."

With the air of one who felt perfectly satisfied with himself, he passed his dirty fingers through the greasy mass that thatched his round, bullet-shaped head; it bore about as much resemblance to the locks of Lillian as horse-hair does to the finest silk.

"It strikes me, Bet," he observed, as soon as they were alone, "that you have taken a dislike to that gal."

"What if I has?" muttered the female fury. "Ain't I to have my likes and dislikes as well as another?"

Under any other circumstances, that is to say, if Lilly had come into his hands in the ordinary way of business, this would have appeared only reasonble, for after all, Bet was a valuable wife to him; but he had other views and expectations.

"Can't you read it?" he said.

"Read what?" demanded the woman, sullenly.

"That the time'll come when that gal, if properly managed, will prove a fortin' to us. If somebody is villin' to pay fifty pounds to hear of her death, why somebody else may be villin' to pay ten fifties *to hear that she is alive*. Now are you fly? Can't you see it?"

Bet's amiable disposition had been too much ruffled to see anything of the kind. The prospect was too much in the perspective, even if she had been in the best of humors, to strike her very forcibly. Her only reply, therefore, was an impatient toss of the head, accompanied by something about the speaker's being able to see through a millstone.

"Very well," said her husband, savagely. "I know yer game, but ye shan't play it. I won't have a finger laid upon Lilly."

"You won't?"

"No; and if ye does, Bet, I'll——but there: I needn't say any more; you knows me. I've said it, and I means it. When the gal wants a thrashing *I'll give it her myself*."

How far the victim might profit by this very considerate arrangement remains to be seen. For the present, at least, it had one advantage—it secured her against any positive ill usage on the part of Bet.

The tigress for once was cowed.

During the night Lillian heard many things from her young companion, which very much surprised her; the first was that she was to be taught to dance on poles in the streets, and walk round the crowd with a little spangled cap in her hand, to collect contributions from the crowd. One piece of advice was really valuable.

"When master gives you a cut with the whip," said Liz, "don't cry out, and then you won't catch another. Fan used to shriek so, and that was why she got more than all the rest of us."

"And does he often beat you?" inquired the child, with a shudder.

"*Only* when he's drunk—at exercise—or the people don't give us much money," replied Liz; "he ain't half so sharp as Bet."

"Is he your father?"

"We always call him father in the streets," was the cautious answer—"at home we say master—though I can recollect another father; and—but no, no—I dare not tell you that."

"Why not?"

"You might split on me," answered Liz, musingly. "I don't know you well enough yet. Ain't we warm and comfortable here," she added, evidently anxious to change the subject of conversation; "better with me than in the washus where poor Fan was. I used to creep to her at night, and snug to her to keep her warm, till they found it out, and I got a good whipping."

"Why did they put her in the wash-house?"

"She did cough so," said the child.

Lilly mentally resolved, if possible, never to cough, and avoid being sent there.

In the morning all the children were up early. Liz, being the eldest, lit the fire, and then began to put the room to rights; Loo, a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, little creature, thrust one of her wasted arms into Fiddler Dick's boot, and began brushing it; whilst her sister Tilly removed the things from the table.

The orphan looked round her—she had scarcely dared to make any observation, for fear of giving offence, on the preceding night. In one corner of the place stood a drum, with a clarionet and set of Pandean pipes, suspended by a faded blue riband, over it; in another, the stilts for the dancers; there was a line attached to two hooks, one over the chimney piece, and the other fastened to the window opposite, on which hung a variety of little muslin dresses, spangled, or trimmed with artificial flowers and tinsel.

"That's mine," observed Liz, pointing, with a certain amount of pride, to the smartest one.

"And that's mine," lisped little Loo.

"And do you dance upon these things?" inquired Lillian, pointing to the poles in the corner.

"Yes."

"It must be very hard."

The children laughed, and assured her that nothing could be more easy. To convince her that such was really the case, Loo dropped the boot she had been cleaning, and, with an agility which terrified the new-comer, sprang upon the stilts, by first placing the ends under her arms, like a pair of crutches; the others followed her example, and they walked, danced, and wheeled round the narrow space with a velocity that made Lillian quite giddy contemplating them.

"I shall never be able to do that," she observed, with a sigh.

"Oh, yes, you will," said Liz.

"She hasn't felt the whip yet," added Tilly.

Lillian had felt it. Bursting into tears, she silently bared her shoulder, on which the mark of the lash still remained, red and inflamed. Her fellow-sufferers gazed upon it without expressing either curiosity or sympathy. It was no novelty to them; in fact, they almost wondered what she was crying for, seeing that the punishment must have been inflicted the preceding night.

"You will soon learn," lisped Loo. "Fan wasn't half so strong as you are."

The fire was blazing cheerfully—if anything could look cheerful in such a miserable hole—the boots cleaned, and everything ready for breakfast a couple of hours at least before the master of the house made his appearance. Even then, they had a long time to wait for Bet; like most gin-drinkers, neither of the precious pair cared much about food in the morning.

To do him justice, however, Fiddler Dick saw that the children had theirs; they were the sources of his idleness, the means by which he lived, and he could not afford to let them knock up.

"No work to-day, girls," he exclaimed, casting anything but an amiable glance at the window, through which the snow might be seen falling thickly.

His wife looked equally discontented; she calculated the keep of her victims, who tried very hard not to seem pleased at being spared exposure to the cold and snow.

"Can't be helped," he added; "mustn't lose time, however."

"With a lazy, lounging air, as if every step he took was a trouble to him, he walked to the corner in which the stilts were piled, and picked out the shortest pair.

"Come here, Lilly," he said.

The heart of the orphan beat wildly, as she advanced to him.

"You haven't got your whip, Dick," observed Bet, maliciously.

"Give it us then," replied the ruffian. "And now, Lilly, come and take your first lesson."

CHAPTER XXI.

MARK RAYNER ENLISTS.—THE DEATH OF FANNY.

The embarkation of the gallant 01st for India was proceeding rapidly at Southampton. Three days more and the transport would have taken in its living freight, spread its white wings, and, like some huge leviathan, commenced plowing its native element. Lady Bell was delighted with the novelty and bustle of the scene—the succession of boats filled with the men rowing continually from shore; the hearty cheer they gave as they stepped on deck, cheers which came merrily over the waters, and reached her at the window of the hotel, from which she would stand for hours watching them impatiently, till her own turn of bidding adieu to *terra firma* came.

Meanwhile Sir Charles and his orderly, Corporal Stock, were busily engaged in arranging one of the most commodious of the state cabins for her reception. Every comfort that affection could suggest, or modern invention design, was sent on board the "Harold."

So intently occupied with these attentions was the colonel, that the affairs of the regiment were left in the hands of Major Plinlimmon. Unhappy man—he had no wife. Years ago old bachelorhood had set its seal upon him; and the lines were as sharp and scratchy as though the impression had been made but yesterday.

It must be confessed that Sir Charles had an able assistant in the person of his orderly, who had never separated from him for any length of time since he entered the regiment. He had been born, as he frequently used to boast, over his master's stables; and when the young squire, for he had not succeeded to the baronetcy then, obtained his first commission, John Stock enlisted in the same regiment, refused every offer to purchase his discharge, and the reason he gave for it was, that Master Charlie shouldn't get rid of him.

The faithful fellow would long before have risen to the rank of sergeant-major but for two obstacles: he could neither read nor write, and what was more, didn't care to learn. He could brush clothes or groom a horse without any of that nonsense; in short, he had but one wish—through life to remain in the service in which he had been born and be gratified.

When Sir Charles married, the corporal had serious doubts in his own mind whether he ought not to marry too. Unfortunately, the bride's waiting-maid was a French one, and John Stock couldn't abide anything that wasn't English. He made one or two attempts to get over his aversion, and render himself agreeable; but madmoiselle only laughed at him. She had no idea of a husband of fifty, if her young lady had.

That settled the question. He wouldn't have married a duchess if she had spoken slightingly of his master. It was Stock's first courtship and his last.

This somewhat eccentric person was a great favorite with Lady Bell, who frequently declared that, after her husband, he was the only loveable man in the regiment, an assertion at which the young officers laughed heartily; *but John believed her*. He had a very high opinion of her good sense; in fact, it would have been rather ungrateful of him to have doubted it.

Although it was not exactly his duty to attend to such matters, the corporal had seen with his own eye that breakfast was properly laid for Sir Charles and his lady; he had ironed the papers, as he had regularly done for more than thirty years, placed the Times for his master and the Post for his mistress, on whose plate a little three-cornered note was lying, simply addressed to "Mi ladi."

"Why, it's Annette's writing," exclaimed her ladyship, when she perceived it. "Why doesn't the silly thing speak to me if she has anything to say?"

The colonel was too deeply occupied in the leader of the Times to hear this.

"What shall I do?" asked the wife, after reading the note. "The ungrateful creature!—at such a moment, too! after the promises I made her."

"What is the matter, my love?" asked the husband, laying down the paper.

Stock would have liked to have asked the same question, but contented himself with waiting to hear the answer.

"Read it, Charlie," said his wife, handing it to him.

The French waiting-maid had taken French leave—her courage had failed her at the sight of the sea; and Monsieur Hypolite, the hair-dresser in the Burlington-arcade, had come down all the way to Southampton to make her an offer—she *au desespoir* to disoblige so good a mistress, etc., etc., etc.

"The jade!" muttered the corporal, involuntarily.

The colonel turned sharply round to reprove him; but the offender did not choose to meet his eye just then—something had attracted his attention in the street.

"What will you do, my love?" said Sir Charles.

"What can I do?—only three more days."

"Perhaps you had better write to your aunts to find you another *femme-de-chambre*."

"They are in Norfolk," answered her ladyship, pettishly, "and would send me some awkward, stupid creature, to try my patience every minute."

"To my sister, then," added the gentleman.

"That would be worse."

"Some of your friends."

"Friends!" repeated Lady Bell; "did you ever know friends put themselves out of the way when service was really required? Do, Sir Charles, for *once* in your life suggest something really reasonable. Now, don't smile in that quiet, provoking way," she added; "what would you say if any one came and told you that Stock had run away?"

"He wouldn't believe it, my lady," said the man, answering the question for his master, who tried to look exceedingly grave.

"I wish you were a French waiting-maid, John," observed his mistress.

"Thank you, my lady," replied the old soldier, in a tone so irresistibly comic, that neither husband nor wife could retain their gravity.

After all, the difficulty was a grave one; something must be done. Lady Bell did not wish anything unreasonable—that is to say, *very unreasonable* for a woman young, rich, beautiful, lately married, who had never been contradicted, and could not dress her back hair. The ship must be detained for a week.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the colonel, despairingly.

Her ladyship chose to consider herself a very ill-used person; and as the real culprit was not present to serve as a conductor to her anger, it very naturally vented itself upon the speaker.

What could he mean by such an unkind word—"impossible"—to the first serious request she had ever made to him?

It was in vain the doting husband attempted to explain that it was quite out of his power to detain the vessel a single day; the wife turned poutingly away.

At this juncture John Stock crept quietly out of the room. He was a great tactician in his way—had proved a most valuable servant to his master in the days of his bachelorhood, and now that he was married, showed himself just as discreet.

Sir Charles felt hurt, and walked to the window. It was the first cloud of unkindness that had ever passed between them; fortunately, it proved but a momentary one: the sunshine of a naturally happy disposition dispersed it almost as soon as formed.

Gliding gently after him, his wife laid her head upon his shoulder, and looked up into his face with tearful eyes but smiling lips.

"It's all your fault, Charlie," she whispered; "you are too good to me. Aunt Margaret said that you would spoil me."

As a matter of course, the gentleman vowed that was impossible, kissed away her tears, and wondered that she endured the annoyance and inconvenience Annette had put her to so patiently.

Still the important question, what was to be done, remained unanswered. The colonel suggested running up to town himself. This, however, Lady Bell would not listen to; in her anxiety to atone for her past unkindness, she affected indifference, wondered how she had suffered such a trifle to vex her, declared she could do without a waiting-maid during the voyage, that the stewardess or one of the sergeant's wives should assist her.

This, however, was an arrangement Sir Charles positively refused to listen to; and in doing so he displayed a remarkable knowledge of the sex, considering he had been so many years a bachelor. A husband of her own age, in all probability, would have acceded to it as the readiest way of avoiding further trouble, but the husband of fifty knew better.

Various plans were still under discussion, when a gentle tap at the door was heard.

"Come in," cried the gentleman.

Corporal Stock made his appearance, his looks full of importance.

"I think, Colonel," he began, drawing himself up in an attitude of attention, as he invariably did when about to make a speech, "I've found the very thing her ladyship requires."

"A French waiting-maid?"

"No, Colonel, an English one."

"Who is she?" inquired the lady.

"The wife of a tall, fine fellow, who wants to enlist."

"Where is she?"

"Below, my lady."

"And what does she look like?"

"Pretty, modest, and very unhappy," answered the old soldier, with a strong emphasis upon each word. "I only wish your ladyship would see her; take my word for it, she is worth a dozen such flighty articles as Mam'selle, who never knew her own mind five minutes together."

"I will see her," said Lady Bell, whose curiosity, and, to do her justice, whose better feelings were excited by the description; "it is just possible," she added, turning to her husband, "that she may suit."

The colonel shrugged his shoulders. He had no such hope.

In a few minutes Mark Rayner and Rose made their appearance in the drawing-room.

"A fine fellow," thought the commander of the gallant 01st, eyeing him critically.

"Really modest and prepossessing," mentally observed his wife.

"So, my man, you want to enlist?" said the former.

"Provided I am not separated from my wife," was the reply.

"And you seek a place as waiting-maid?" demanded Lady Bell; "have you ever been in such a situation before?"

"Never," answered Rose.

"Really, your hair is very tastefully dressed. Who taught you?"

"No one, my lady."

"And how comes it that you want to enlist, and your wife to take a situation?" inquired the colonel.

Mark related his story. Not quite as briefly as Rose would have wished, for he dwelt upon her goodness, the sacrifice she had made for him, and his own misconduct, with a manly frankness and regret, which produced a favorable impression upon his hearers. Lady Bell's feelings became positively enlisted in his favor, when he described how they had been plundered by a hypocritical old rascal who advertised the sale of berths in the paper; their going to Liverpool, disappointment, and return to London. She would have engaged Rose at once, but a look from her husband restrained her.

Although a kind-hearted man, he was also a man of the world.

"In what day's paper," he asked, "did you see this advertisement?"

"In Thursday's, Sir Charles."

"Stock, the *Times*."

The corporal hastily searched amongst the pile of newspapers on one of the side tables, till he found the one required, and handed it to his master, who soon discovered the advertisement.

"Have you the tickets?"

Mark produced them.

"So far, my man," observed the baronet, "your tale appears consistent enough; and were it merely a question of receiving you into my regiment, I should inquire no further—perhaps not have inquired so much, although a recruit is all the better looked upon when his antecedents are known."

Here Lady Bell began to beat the carpet with a tiny foot, a sign that she was getting slightly impatient.

"But before I can consent to Lady Fourreau's engaging your wife to attend upon her," added the speaker, "I must have some further reference. Do you know any one in London?"

"No one that we can refer to, sir," replied Rose, with great presence of mind. "But if you would write to St. Faith's, to Mr. Thornton, the magistrate; or the rector, Dr. Poundtext, either of them, I am sure, would confirm every word we have stated."

Sir Charles wrote down the address.

The eyes of the speaker filled with tears; evidently she wanted to add something more, but shame or the fear of offending restrained her.

"Speak freely," said Lady Bell, who had been watching her.

"Ask any question you please, sir," continued the faithful wife; "but don't, pray don't say my husband is going to enlist, or that I am seeking a service. We once had a home, a happy, though humble one, and land of our own, and——"

"I understand," interrupted the colonel, "and will frame my questions so as to spare your feelings."

"Thank you, sir."

"At all events," he continued, turning to Mark, "you may enlist; and I promise you that your wife shall accompany the regiment to India; but whether as Lady Fourreau's attendant, or with the wives of your comrades, must depend upon the answer to my letter."

The applicants thanked him gratefully, and withdrew; one weight, at least, was removed from their hearts; come what might, they would not be separated.

The corporal followed them from the drawing-room; the honest fellow had taken quite an interest in Rose and her husband, and resolved to enlist the latter himself. "It will be a credit," he thought, "to bring such a fine-looking fellow into the regiment."

"I am sure," said Mark, before accepting the shilling, "I may reply upon the word of the colonel."

"I should think you might," replied the old soldier, drily; "he never broke it since I've known him, and that's going on for fifty years."

"Rose?"

"Take it," said his wife, firmly.

The palm of Mark Rayner closed over the coin.

During the day Lady Fourreau sent for the former to the hotel, and they had a long conversation together on the various mysteries of the toilette, a subject which only a female pen can venture to do more than touch upon. There were many points, no doubt, on which the fashionable wife found the simple Rose lamentably deficient; but then the emergency was great, her tale of sorrow had interested her, and before dismissing her, she promised, provided the answer to Sir Charles's letter proved satisfactory, to engage her at least for the voyage out.

When, at dinner, she informed her husband what she had done, he shook his head half reprovingly.

"Always acting upon impulse," he said.

"Now, Charlie," replied the lady, "it is you that are unreasonable; remember, you fixed the conditions yourself. Besides, the affair is peculiarly my own. What would you say to me, if I were to interfere with the command of your regiment?"

"My love!"

"I've a great mind to try it."

The colonel began to look a little uneasy.

"And I will, too," added his wife, laughingly. "There, don't look so horror-struck; I'll do nothing unfeminine or very dreadful, I promise you."

Stock, who was waiting at table, turned aside to conceal a smile. He felt convinced that her ladyship would keep her word.

The next post brought a reply from the Elms. It ran thus:

"Mr. Thornton presents his compliments to Sir Charles Fourreau, and is most happy in being able to answer his inquiries respecting Mark Rayner and his wife favorably, especially regarding the latter, whom he has known for years. Her conduct, both as a girl and a wife, has ever been most exemplary; in fact, cited as an example to the young women of St. Faith's. Sir Charles Fourreau may rest assured that she is a trustworthy person; her integrity is undoubted.

"Mr. Thornton would have felt happy, had they remained at St. Faith's, to have taken them both into his employ."

"Satisfactory, quite satisfactory," said the baronet, handing the letter to his wife, who felt delighted that the good opinion she had formed of her *protege* was confirmed.

Mark and his wife were sent for; the former appeared to great advantage in his undress uniform.

The colonel mentally decided that he had not a finer looking man in his regiment.

The letter was read over to them.

"Mr. Thornton is a good gentleman," said the recruit, "and has spoken more kindly of me, perhaps, than I deserve. But not of Rose," he added, gazing proudly on her; "she merits every word that he has written about her, and more, much more, if he knew all."

"Hush!" whispered his wife.

"What troop are you in," replied his commanding officer, pleased at what he considered the manliness of his remarks.

"Captain Dunlick's," replied Mark.

Lady Bell made a slight grimace; evidently the captain was no favorite of hers.

"You will proceed on board at once, and——"

"Stay, stay!" interrupted her ladyship. "The colonel means that you will proceed on board *tomorrow*; he forgets that your wife is to remain at the hotel, and that you must have many things to say to each other. Conduct yourself well," she added, "and you may rely that he will not lose sight of you."

Rose and her husband both looked exceedingly grateful, and Sir Charles, happy to be let off so easily, good-naturedly confirmed the arrangement.

"I kept my promise," said his wife, when they had withdrawn.

"Gracefully, and like yourself," replied her husband, gaily. "But, Bell, I think I must make a compromise with you."

"What is it?" demanded the lady, laughingly.

"No more interference in military matters; discipline must not be tampered with: come, promise me. Of course," he added, "I shall always feel happy to listen to anything you may have to say, privately."

"A compromise?"

"No—a treaty."

"Which I loyally ratify!" exclaimed her ladyship.

The commander of the 01st gallantly kissed the white hand extended to him, and the subject dropped between them.

We must once more, and, we trust, for the last time, trouble our readers to return with us to the house of the convict in the Belvedere-road, where Fan, now thoroughly *disciplined* to answer to the name of Lillian, was rapidly dying. The parish doctor had been called in, and at once pronounced the case beyond the reach of science.

"Let her have anything she asks for," he said; "she cannot last more than three or four days."

Mike listened to the sentence with pleasure. Every word was like the signature of a bank-note to him. In a few hours the five hundred pounds would be his, and the *great risk* avoided; yet, brief as was the time the surgeon had fixed, the ruffian felt a nervous impatience to shorten it. Prudence alone restrained him; so, for the first two days he contented himself with *smoking* continually in her presence.

"Every little helps," he thought, each time he heard her cough.

On the third morning, when he entered the bedroom—for he had removed the sufferer from the dark closet where Lillian slept for appearance' sake—he found Fan apparently much better. Although he had the pipe as usual between his lips, the child never coughed once. Mike didn't half like it—couldn't tell what to make of it. Was it possible she could be getting better?

"I am so glad," exclaimed the little victim; "I have seen father."

"What!" said the ruffian; "has Fiddler Dick been here?"

"I mean my own father, the one that used to take me on his knees a long while ago, kiss me, play with me in the garden, and call me Fanny."

"Your name ain't Fanny, I tell yer," roared the convict.

"Yes, it is."

Mike raised the whip. To his astonishment, the child, instead of shrinking and trembling at the sight of it, looked up in his face and smiled. She was no longer afraid of him.

A suspicion of the truth suddenly crossed his mind: she was dying; and the majesty of death, even in one so young, restrained the heavy hand of her brutal tyrant. To assure himself that such was really the fact, he thrust his hand under the bed-clothes and felt her feet: they were quite cold. She appeared perfectly unconscious that he had touched them.

"And so you saw yer father, did yer?" said the convict.

"And the garden and the flowers," answered Fan.

"And where did you see them?"

The child tried to raise her emaciated arm, and pointed to the foot of the bed, in the direction Mike was standing. A chill crept through his veins, and he moved uneasily to the other side of the room.

The eyes of the poor dying girl still remained fixed in the direction to which she had just pointed.

"What are you a-starin' at?" he demanded.

The word "father" fell, gently murmured, on his ear. The ruffian quitted the room: he could endure it no longer. A nameless terror fell on him. Perhaps the bright spirits hovering round that innocent death-bed inspired the fear, that he might not profane it by his presence.

Not only did he leave the room but the house, carefully locking the door after him.

"It will be all over by the time I come back," he muttered, "and then I shall be a made man. Five hundred pounds!"

Feeling rather shaky on the occasion, he directed his steps to one of his usual haunts to strengthen his "nerves," as he called them, by the usual stimulant—gin.

No sooner was the dying child left alone than her eyelids began to droop, gently, as if the fingers of some pitying angel pressed them down, no mother's hand being near to close them, and sweet sleep fell on her—sleep accompanied by happy dreams, judging from the smile which rested on her pale, thin lips, and remained there long after the spirit of the little sufferer had passed from earth—

> "A smile as pure as e'er was given
> By a soul redeem'd, just winged for heaven."

So imperceptibly did the change take place, that it would have been impossible for the most experienced eye to have marked the exact moment, which was unaccompanied either by a struggle or a sigh. The life of Fanny exhaled silently away, like the perfume of some delicate, half-closed flower untimely plucked, or that unkind frosts had nipped.

The weather, which had been dull and gloomy all the morning, now began to break, and a struggling sunbeam, such as will occasionally force its way through the foggy atmosphere of London, penetrated into the chamber of death, and rested like a benediction on the pale features of the untimely dead.

When Mike returned home, which he took care to do before the usual hour of the parish doctor's visit, he just ventured to take one peep into the room, and, satisfied that all was over, returned to the kitchen to await his arrival. Strange to say, he did not feel quite so happy as he expected he should; the sight of the wasted, colorless features of the little victim had produced a disagreeable impression: conscience had imprinted them upon his memory, and he half regretted having left the skylight open, and accelerated her death by removing the coverlet from the bed.

It was quite a relief to him when the medical man and his assistant entered.

"How is the child?" inquired the former.

"Why, I think she be better, doctor," replied the hypocrite; "poor little thing! I took her up some tea this morning, but she didn't drink it—she seemed more inclined to go to sleep."

"And her cough?"

"Oh, that be quite gone. I ain't heard her the last hour. Won't you step up and look at her?"

Judging what had taken place, the gentleman complied with his request, and, accompanied by his assistant, followed the speaker up the narrow staircase.

"Lilly, do speak to me," exclaimed Mike, pretending to be very much alarmed. "She be mortal bad, I fear."

"She will never know what pain is again," observed the parish doctor, placing his fingers on her pulse. "She is dead, and must have been so this two hours. I told you from the first," he added, "it was impossible she could recover."

"Poor thing!" said the convict, trying to look very much concerned; "I ain't had her long, but I feel as if I had lost one of my own."

"What do you mean?" inquired the assistant; "Was not the child yours?"

"Not a bit on it," answered the ruffian; "only a *nuss* child."

"And who are her parents?"

"Can't tell. A lady brought her to me, and promised me so much a week for her keep. I don't even know her name."

"I thought you called her Lilly."

"Yes, that's one of her names," answered Mike. "I wished I'd never a-taken her; but the money was an object, for I am a poor man. Don't you think, sir," he added, addressing himself to the surgeon, "you had better open her?"

The gentleman regarded him very earnestly, wondering what could be the motive for such an unusual request—persons of the speaker's class generally entertaining a weak and childish horror of such a thing, which they looked upon as an outrage offered to the dead.

"Do you wish it?" he demanded.

"Well, I rather like it."

"And why?"

"That there may be no mistake about what she died on," said the old rascal, knowingly. "The world ain't a bit too charitable about judging of its neighbors."

"After what you have stated," replied the parish doctor, "I feel it my duty to make a *post mortem* examination; not that I entertain the slightest doubt of the result."

Mike did not exactly understand what a *post mortem* examination meant, but he concluded that his desire would be complied with.

It was duly and carefully made, and the result proved as the medical man expected—consumption: the diagnostics of the disease were unmistakable. A certificate to that effect was given, and Mike now felt himself perfectly secure. He could defy his brother and Lady Boothroyd.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

MR. BROWNLEE'S VISITOR.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Mr. Brownlee felt comfortable. It was evening, and late in December. Outside the wind had a cold, sharp whistle, and the snow, with which it was laden, had been weaving, since early morning, a shroud for the waning year. Within, the grate glowed, the gas burned brilliantly, wife smiled, and children played in happy unconsciousness of cold, or want, or suffering.

Mr. Brownlee was in his pleasant sitting-room, the walls of which were hung with pictures, the windows draped with curtains, and the floor carpeted with yielding Brussels. He sat by a center table, on which were new books and the latest numbers of the best monthlies.

Now, all this was calculated to make a man feel comfortable; and Mr. Brownlee was entitled to what he enjoyed, for he was an honorable, intelligent, active and successful merchant, a good citizen, a loving husband, and a wise and tender parent.

"Wasn't that our bell?" Mr. Brownlee asked, looking up from the page of a book.

"I think so," answered Mrs. Brownlee, and both listened, as the waiter moved along the passage. A man's voice was heard.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Brownlee, "if that were Mr. Lewis." There was a shade of dissatisfaction in his tones.

"Mr. Lewis," said the waiter, entering the sitting-room a few moments afterwards.

"Ask him to walk up stairs."

The waiter retired. Mr. and Mrs. Brownlee looked at each other; but as their children were present, neither made any remark. But it was understood between them that the visit of Mr. Lewis was mutually regarded as something bordering on an intrusion. They were feeling very comfortable, as we have seen, shut in from the chilling wintry blasts, and with the most agreeable surroundings; and the presence of any stranger, just at that time, could scarcely help being unwelcome.

"Good evening, Mr. Lewis." Mr. Brownlee's voice was kind, if not cordial.

A man plainly, we might say coarsely, dressed, entered the room. His manners were far from being polished; though his rather pale, care-worn face had in it many indications of a natural refinement.

"Good evening," he responded, giving an awkward nod. "Good evening, ma'am," was added, with a nod in turn to Mrs. Brownlee. And then he came forward and took the chair that was offered him, and drawing up to the grate, warmed himself.

"Heavy storm, this," remarked Mr. Brownlee.

"Yes. The snow lies over a foot deep. But you are very comfortable here." And Mr. Lewis glanced around the pleasant room.

"How is your wife to-day?" inquired Mrs. Brownlee.

"Something better, thank you, ma'am. I haven't been able to see her, but the nurse told me that she slept last night, and has less fever to-day. I feel very much encouraged. Oh, dear! If she only gets over it, I shall be so rejoiced!"

"How many children have you?"

"Four, ma'am; and the youngest is just about as old as that dear little girl now in your lap. O, dear! It was hard for her to be separated from her mother; but harder for the mother. I'm so in hopes she'll get safely over it soon. I talked with the doctor to-day, and he says that he's no doubt all will come out right."

"I hope so, indeed," said Mrs. Brownlee, kindly.

"How pleasant it is here," and Mr. Lewis looked all around the room again. "And you are so happy in having all your children around you. Home is a blessed place—blessed even though homely. Mine wasn't like this; but it was a happy home for all that."

"Where are your children now?"

"Scattered all around among relations—poor things! Since my wife's sickness, it's taken all I had saved, and all I could earn, to get her doctored. Oh, if they should cure her now! I shall be so happy."

"We will hope for the best," said Mr. Brownlee.

"I always do that; but it's been hoping against hope for the last eight or nine months. The darkest hour, they tell us, is just before daybreak. So I comfort myself with thinking the morning is very near."

Mr. and Mrs. Brownlee were touched with the earnestness and simple pathos of their visitor, a poor man from the country, who had brought his wife to one of the city hospitals to be cured, if possible, of a disease that for a time threatened her life. Mr. Brownlee had met him by accident, and from kindness of heart invited him to his house. Mr. Lewis had taken advantage of this invitation, to drop in two or three times a week and enjoy the home comforts, and the books and periodicals he found in Mr. Brownlee's pleasant sitting-room. He was not always an entirely welcome guest; and yet, he was so simple-minded, so interested with the children, and manifested so much enjoyment in the books and magazines he found upon the center table, that neither Mr. Brownlee nor his wife could feel anything but kindness towards their unsophisticated intruder.

On the present occasion, Mr. Lewis, after warming himself by the grate, talking for a time in his own peculiar way, and amusing himself with the children, took up a book, and was soon buried in its pages. Time went gliding by on swift wings, and Mr. Lewis took no note of his flight. Nine o'clock came, and the last child was put to bed, but he went on turning the pages of the book in which he had become interested, wholly unconscious that the long evening had waned so far. Half-past nine found him still buried in its pages.

Mr. Brownlee, who had, for a time, felt pleasure in the poor man's enjoyment of his comfortable surroundings, now began wishing him away.

"I like to be hospitable," he said to himself, "but this is carrying the joke a little too far."

Ten o'clock was rung out at last by the handsome French clock on the mantel-piece, but Mr. Lewis did not heed the warning.

"This is a very interesting book," he said, about five minutes afterwards, looking at Mr. Brownlee, his mild face beaming with true enjoyment. "How pleasant it is here," he added, and then his eyes went back to the page from which he had lifted them.

Mr. Brownlee's heart softened towards the poor man, and yet he could not overcome a feeling of annoyance at his prolonged stay. He looked at his wife, and his wife looked at him—then they glanced mutually and meaningly at Mr. Lewis. Mrs. Brownlee yawned, and Mr. Brownlee yawned, rather loudly, in concert. But their guest was wholly oblivious. The fascination of the page was complete. Next Mr. Brownlee got up, and commenced pacing the floor; he was too fidgetty to sit still. He looked at the clock, the minute hand of which was now almost at thirty, looked at Mr. Lewis, looked at his wife, knit his brows, and then walked on more rapidly than before. At last impatience spoke out.

"Mr. Lewis," said he, "do you know how late it is?" Now, Mr. Brownlee tried to say this with some gentleness; but his real feelings came more fully into his voice than he was aware. It was plain, from the shadow that came instantly over the face of Mr. Lewis, as he closed the book and let it fall upon the table, that he felt rebuked. His eyes glanced from the countenance of Mr. Brownlee to the clock on the mantel.

"Half past ten!" he said, in surprise. "I didn't dream of its being so late. Time passes much quicker here, I think, than it does in some other places. Good evening, sir! Good evening, ma'am! I shall remember your kindness as long as I live. I should not have staid so late. But a book and this pleasant room made me forget myself. At the cheap tavern where I am staying, there is no place to sit down in but the bar; and I don't like drinking, smoking and swearing. I walk the streets half of the evening, sometimes, but to-night was too stormy. Good evening, sir. Good evening, ma'am."

And Mr. Lewis turned away, and went forth into the blinding storm, to walk nearly half a mile before gaining his dreary lodging-place.

"Poor man!" There was pity in the voice of Mrs. Brownlee.

"And yet," said Mr. Brownlee, speaking in answer to the words of Mr. Lewis, rather than to those of his wife, "I gave him grudgingly of my home-comforts; and suffered a weak, selfish annoyance, while he was drinking in pleasure at every source! What a storm it is!" Mr. Brownlee glanced towards the window, against which had come the snow-laden blast with a heavier rush. "And I have sent this poor man forth to meet its wintry chill, with a pressure on his feelings. A little more patience, a little more consideration, a little more unselfish pleasure in sharing my goodgifts with him, would have made his spirit lighter, and mine also. Kindness, humanity, ty, regard for others, ever bear a double blessing, the want of them as surely lays upon hearts a double burden. I was never more conscious of this than I am to-night. I will try not to forget the lesson. The lighting of another's candle at ours should never dim its radiance, as it has dimmed mine to-night."

DID SHE BETTER HERSELF?

BY CLARA SYDNEY.

Aye, did she? that's the question. She derided and jeered at me because I was content to plod on in the old way; but what has she gained by jumping so hastily out of it?

She wasn't going to be an old maid, she said, not she; and lest there might not offer another opportunity soon enough to save her from "the first corner," she took that pig-hearted Ephraim.

Poor thing! her glory soon became dim; for she was so disheartened by her very first week's experience as wife that she could not hide it. The pig takes no pains to disguise his nature; and she gets the full benefit of it. To be sure, Kitty don't have to come to the shop any more, and don't have to be poked about in uncomfortable boarding-houses, and she will never again have to dread coming to that wretched state "old maidhood," but then she dare hardly turn herself round without the leave of that horrid husband of hers; she don't have a cent of money to spend; she never can go to visit her friends, or have them come to see her. As for love and petting, of which she is so fond, she don't begin to get so much of these as she had when she was among us; for all us girls loved her; but that morose animal don't know how to love, and even if he *should* take a fit to try to pet her, it would be as babies always pet their kittens, by brushing them the wrong way and half murdering them. There is no tenderness, gentleness or sympathy in that man any more than there is in a hedge-hog; and if she is ever sick and wants pity and loving care, she must look to somebody besides her husband for them. He is as contrary, too, as an ill-made chimney; and, as a humorous writer says of somebody, "Is so given to contradiction that he'd open the window at midnight to tell the watchman 'twas no such thing when he said ''tis twelve o'clock and all's well.'"

Poor Kitty! she is kept penned up in that gloomy old prison of a house till she has the air of a terrified mouse whenever she does find herself in the street. Fine! isn't it? this having a rich husband!

I say give me an old maid's appointed portion, viz., to dry up and blow away—rather than the *thraldom* without the *love* and *happiness* of marriage.

OUR COMMON LOT.

BY W. E. PABOR.

It must be so, oh! mortal; oh! think it over well;
Each heart must pass the portal where Death sits sentinel,
And men shall say, "he passed away," as they the end shall tell.

The heart that has been gladdest, its gladness must lay down;
The heart that may be saddest, must lay aside grief's crown;
And all that smile must end erewhile the smile that gives renown.

The past has told its story; the record is unfurled;
That neither gold nor glory give life-lease in the world;
And they who boast their station most, are soonest from it hurled.

The earth has many morrows; few of them may be ours!
The world has many sorrows and Death hath boundless powers;
And oh! ere long some wailing song may mark our vanished hours.

Then let us learn the lessons that daily meet our eyes;
With all our proud possessions, we'll not be rich or wise
Unless our heart hath certain part of Promise for the skies.

If we have this, oh mortal! for us, then, all is well;
And when we pass the portal, where Death sits sentinel,
Then men shall say, "he passed away, in blessed lands to dwell."

◆

THE MURDERERS FOILED.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

On the main road between Hartford and New Haven, during the early settlement of Connecticut, upon the side of a hill, a little distance back from the road, with a pleasant lawn in front, there stood a neat-looking farm-house, owned and tenanted by a widow and her daughter, a girl about sixteen years of age. This widow, Mrs. Spencer, was the mother of two children—the one already referred to, and a dissolute son, some three or four and twenty years of age—who, having squandered the portion left him by his father, had quarreled with his mother some months anterior to the date of our story, because she would not supply him with means to continue his reveling and extravagances, and so had cruelly deserted her, since when she had heard nothing of him.

One evening, in the fall of the year, just as the widow and her daughter were about to retire for the night, they were somewhat surprised to hear a gentle tap on the door. Supposing it to be a neighbor, the nearest one of which was about half-a-mile distant, Mrs. Spencer, without any previous questioning, proceeded to open it, when she was surprized, and not a little startled, on perceiving two men, both of venerable appearance, but plainly and rather roughly dressed, standing before her.

"Madam," said one, bowing politely, with a dignified air, and using language more refined than would seem to befit an obscure provincial, "we are travelers, passing through the country, and, being somewhat fatigued, have called to see if it would be agreeable to you to allow us to spend the night beneath your roof."

"I am not accustomed to harboring strangers," replied Mrs. Spencer, hesitatingly. "From what part of the country do you come?"

"From New Haven," replied the first speaker.

"Have you walked many miles upon this road to-day?" inquired the lady.

"It is some fifteen miles back to our last stopping-place," said the other, rather evasively.

"Then," rejoined the widow, "it seems somewhat strange you did not stop at the village inn, which you have passed about five miles."

"For certain reasons," replied the spokesman of the two travelers, "we did not care to stop there. It was our original intention to have continued on some fifteen miles further; but my companion here, whose health is rather feeble, has complained so much during the last two or three miles, that I have thought it best to defer our further journeying till to-morrow, provided we can find a convenient place of shelter for the night."

The widow scrutinized the two men closely, by the light which she held in her hand, and seemed to hesitate about the propriety of inviting them to enter her dwelling.

"I do not wish to appear inhospitable," she said; "but to tell you the truth, I am almost alone—being myself a widow, with my only son away, and my only daughter here for a companion."

"I am very weak and very much fatigued," now spoke the other, in a feeble voice; "and if you can see proper to permit us to lodge here for the night, we will not trouble you otherwise—we'll reward you satisfactorily, and trust the Lord will do likewise. If we were to return to the inn we have passed, we should be compelled to go just so many miles out of our way; and if we were to continue onward, our road would be much longer before we could reach a place of entertainment—and I am so unwell that I almost fear to attempt it."

After some further conversation, and much hesitation on the part of Mrs. Spencer, she with apparent reluctance consented to entertain them for the night.

She accordingly invited them in, and proceeded to set before them a cold collation—of which they partook with many expressions of thankfulness, saying grace both before and after the meal—all of which greatly tended to relieve the widow of her previous suspicions and fears. The meal being finished, the hostess lighted her guests to a neat little sleeping-apartment on the same floor, bade them good night, and then with her daughter retired to her own, the doors of both opening into the main sitting-room.

It was perhaps an hour or two past midnight, when the elder and more feeble of the travelers, being in a kind of somnolent state, between sleeping and waking, heard a noise as of some one at work upon the fastenings of the shutters of the window which opened into the principal apartment of the dwelling.

As one sometimes will, when in that peculiar state, he heard the noise for several minutes before it roused him to a consciousness of anything being wrong. Then, lest he might be deceived, he attentively listened a short time longer, until he felt certain that he not only heard the peculiar sounds of boring and prying, but voices as of two or more exchanging words in low, guarded tones. Then touching his companion, who generally slept very lightly, he whispered:

"General, I fear there is something wrong here."

"How? what?" returned the other, starting up in bed. "Are we known, do you think? are we pursued?"

"Hist! listen!" said the elder. "Do you not hear a noise, as of some one trying to enter the house?"

"I do," said the other, taking hold of his companion's arm with a nervous gripe. "Can it be that the officers have traced us hither? and are they thus seeking to enter quietly, in order to take us unawares?"

"More likely house-breakers," returned the first speaker. "It seems a little curious, though," he added, reflectively, "that they should make their attempt on this particular night; and I think it as well for us to be upon our guard."

"Most surely—in either case," rejoined the one addressed as general, speaking in the lowest possible whisper. "If they are burglars, Providence may have sent us hither to protect this poor widow; and if they are seeking us, they certainly shall not take us alive! Death—here—quick and sudden will be a thousand times preferable to being taken back to England, and perishing ignominously upon the scaffold, amid the shouts and jeers of the parasites of the son of him whom we judged. Do you remain quietly here, while I steal out and reconnoitre."

"You had better take your arms with you, general."

"I will take my stout walking-stick, which, in my hands, you know, is a very formidable weapon," returned the general; "and meantime do you reprime our pistols, and get our knives ready for a dernier resort. I will not take life unless of necessity; but I would take twenty lives and give up my own, sooner than be taken and chained like a common felon, and allow the dissolute son of an unrighteous father to glory in my public execution."

"Saying this in a guarded whisper, the younger of the two travelers—himself a man of middle age, of venerable aspect, but still strong and active—glided cautiously forth into the larger apartment, stealthily approached the window where the sounds were heard, and bent his head close, to catch, if possible, some words of those without, in order to form an idea of their real design in thus burglariously seeking an entrance.

For some time the boring, chiseling, and prying sounds continued, without a word being spoken; and then the eager listener heard one say, in a low tone, apparently addressing his only companion:

"There, Jim, I think I can shove the bolt now."

"Try it carefully," returned the other voice; "and don't, for heaven's sake, make the least noise! for though in any event we are certain of making our work sure, it may save us a good deal of trouble to take them asleep."

"I understand," replied the first speaker; and then followed a sound as of the bolt being cautiously worked back.

The next minute the heavy window-shutters were as cautiously opened; and peeping out through the glass, the traveler could faintly perceive, by the dim light of the stars, two human figures, standing close by the window.

"I see but two," he mentally muttered, as he drew quickly back, lest he should himself be perceived; "and if these are really all, I can easily manage them without the assistance of my companion. Can they really be seeking us, as their words would seem to imply? I can hardly think so—for I can hardly suppose that any two who know us would be so foolish. No! they must mean the others—the widow and her daughter—in which case they are probably common robbers and murderers. Ha! I shall soon know!" he mentally pursued, as he stealthily glided back to his own apartment; "for they are in the very act of raising the window!"

Slowly, cautiously, and silently the window was lifted; and then our traveler could see a dark head thrust into the apartment, and turned from side to side, as if the owner were guardedly reconnoitering the premises previous to his entrance.

"All right!" he heard a voice whisper; "just give me a lift, Joe, and then I will help you."

With this the head was suddenly thrust in further, and the next moment was followed by the whole body. Turning himself to the window, the first figure gave his hand to his companion, and almost in the next moment stood beside him.

Some low whispering now followed, which the traveler, who had glided into his own room, and shut the door almost close, could not make out; but grasping his heavy walking-stick, tightly and resolutely, he kept his eye at the crevice, and upon the two intruders, till he saw one leave the other and advance stealthily toward him, when, stepping back a pace, and raising his bludgeon for a crushing blow, he quietly awaited his approach.

Had the burglar ventured to push open that door, that moment would have been his last; but just before he reached it, he turned to the one occupied by the females, and bent his head down to listen.

"All right!" the two travelers now heard him whisper to his companion; "you can shine the glim, Joe."

Almost the next moment the room was partially lighted by the opening of a dark lantern, and by this light the travelers made the discovery that the faces of the burglars were blackened. As the one who held the lantern, after throwing the light searchingly around the apartment, came forward to his companion, the latter whispered:

"Give me the glim, Joe—and be ready with your knife—so that the moment I open the door, you can rush in and do your work. And mind you make it sure!—there must be no tales told here."

"I think you ought to have a hand in it too, Jim," returned the other.

"Pshaw! do as you are told—and before I alter my mind, or you will get nothing for your trouble. Do you think I could look upon *them* and *strike* too? You must think I have no human feeling whatever. It is bad enough that I am here to sanction the deed."

"Well, then," replied Joe, "just you open the door, and hold the light so that I can see, and I'll soon show you that I have nerve enough for anything."

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon our traveler, who stood near the midnight assassins, watching his opportunity to punish them as it were in the very act; and just as the one addressed as Jim was about to perform his part—and the other, knife in hand, was preparing to spring forward and do the bloody deed—he darted out suddenly, and, almost leaping upon the startled ruffians—who had not time even for an exclamation of terror—brought down his heavy bludgeon, in quick succession, upon the heads of both, and with such precision and force as to lay them senseless upon the floor.

The noise of the blows and falls alarmed the sleeping hostess, and starting up with a frightened cry, she threw open the door, and beholding the traveler with a club in his hand, and probably supposing he intended to murder her, she shrieked, and would have fallen, had he not caught her with his strong arm.

"Madam," he said, in a gentle tone, "be not alarmed—the danger is now past. These ruffians had broken into your house, and would have murdered you, but that the Lord, in his goodness, permitted me to be here for your deliverance."

For a few minutes a scene of great confusion and excitement prevailed—the daughter starting up and screaming frantically, till the kind words of the traveler had succeeded in pacifying both.

When at length quiet had in some degree been restored, the general proceeded to make an examination of the wounded burglars, who still remained apparently lifeless, just as they had fallen. The one with the knife in his hand he found to be dead, and the other, who showed signs of life, seriously, if not fatally, wounded. Arguing from the fact of their faces being blackened, that they might be persons known to the widow—perhaps neighbors, who had thus disguised themselves, in order in any event not to be recognized—he took up the living one, placed him upon a large table, and, calling for water, proceeded to wash the blood and coloring from his face.

While in the act of doing this, Mrs. Spencer, who stood looking on in horror, suddenly uttered a wild shriek, and exclaiming, "*Oh, my God! my God! it is my own son!*" sank swooning upon the floor.

The wild, fearful scene which followed, we need not describe. Knowing it was no longer a place for themselves, who were flying for their lives, our travelers dressed themselves in haste, despatched the girl to the nearest neighbors for assistance, and, placing the poor mother carefully in bed, took a hurried departure, and fled swiftly across the fields, deeply regretting that their own safety compelled them to this course.

We will give the sequel in a few words. That ungodly son, who, to gain possession of his mother's property, so fiendishly conspired against her life, sufficiently recovered to learn the fate of his companion, confess his own guilt, beg his mother's forgiveness, and die a lingering death—a meet reward for the unnatural crime of a parricide, which he was in heart, if not in deed.

But who were those who so providentially came—so retributively interposed between the guilty and the innocent—and then so suddenly and mysteriously disappeared? None who were present at that fatal scene, or who were called thereto, ever knew who they were, whence they came, or whither they went, and the superstitious were fain to name them as angels in disguise, sent by the Lord for the salvation of the widow and her daughter.

But no! they were human beings—beings having many of the frailties of mortality—men who had held high positions among the rulers of England—generals who had been victorious on many a field against tyranny, under the Protectorate of Cromwell—judges whose voices had been heard in the solemn council which decreed Charles I. to the scaffold—in short, the far-famed regicides, Goffe and Whalley, who were then fugitives from the officers of Charles II., on their way to that mysterious abode which, for so many years, proved their only safe asylum.

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THE DOCTOR'S WIFE;

OR,

PASSAGES OF WESTERN EXPERIENCE.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

Amy Roberts and her lover sat together, on a summer afternoon, engaged in conversation apparently of more than ordinary interest. There was a slight cloud on Amy's fair, low brow, and her lover looked at her anxiously, as if awaiting a decision of great importance.

He had been representing to her that an opportunity of entering upon the practice of his profession in a thriving Western settlement had been offered to him. That the prospects held out were far more flattering than any he could perceive in the future of many years, should he remain in the city, where he was but the junior partner of an old firm, and, while toiling indefatigably and performing all the drudgery, he had little either of credit or profit.

If she would but go with him, he had said, he should not hesitate one moment about accepting the offer which had been made him. He knew that he was asking of her a great sacrifice, many sacrifices, in fact; but if he went alone the parting would be hard on both, and their engagement had already been so long as to give them too much of the "sickness of hope deferred."

On the one hand she would have many privations to encounter; on the other, she would be of incalculable service to him, not only as the companion of his leisure, the soother of his cares, his solace in every trial, but in a business point of view; for a young physician finds his way to practice much more readily if he is married. He would only mention these things, he said in conclusion, and leave her to decide the question without bias from him. Her own happiness, after all, was the chief thing to be considered, and if she thought it best, he would go and make a home for her before asking her to share his banishment from the scenes of their youth.

He had said all this, and in silence awaited her answer.

He had not long to wait. The cloud gradually cleared from Amy's brow, and when she raised her eyes to meet his, Dr. Liston read consent to his wishes, and the deep, fervent love that prompted it, in that sweet, trustful glance. She laid her hand in his, and said, in low, clear tones that indicated a firm, unalterable decision,

"I will go with you, dear Ralph; it is not only my duty, but my privilege. It will be hard to leave them all here at home," and here her tones faltered a little, just a little, "but I know it is right to go with you. You could not do without me, and, Ralph, did you really think I could let you go alone?"

"No, dearest, not without a struggle," answered Dr. Liston, as he kissed her blushing cheek, and thanked her fondly for making him so happy; "but your father and mother. How, think you, will they look upon this project?"

"My father will say that I ought to go with you, for your own sake, and for my own, since in promising to marry you I pledged myself to share your fortunes, and not to shrink from the trials of the early struggling years of your profession. My mother will not reason on the question at all, but her loving heart will tell her that you ought not to go alone, and that your proper companion will be your wife. Both will grieve much at this first breach of our family circle; but they will know that I must follow my destiny, and will place no obstacles in the way."

Amy was right. It cost her parents a severe struggle to part with her, but they knew that she was right in her decision, and, with entire trust in Dr. Liston, they gave him their child, and saw her borne away from the old homestead where all the years of her life had been spent.

As for Ralph and Amy they were more than content, they were mutually anxious to share together the vicissitudes, the cares and the joys of life. Loving and trusting, they went out, hand in hand, to meet their unknown Future.

A few extracts from Amy's letters, written at long intervals during the years that followed, will show how these young adventurers fared in their new home.

"We have been here just three weeks," wrote Amy, "and I am beginning to feel quite settled in my new house. We were one week at the hotel, a great, white building, more than half of which is a wide piazza, on which a number of men are always seated smoking, spitting, betting and telling stories. Apparently, they vie with each other in these accomplishments. At any rate, the man who tells the most marvellous tale of border vicissitudes and 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' is evidently the chief center of attraction.

"At this hotel the landlady was maid-of-all-work as well as hostess. She cooked the meals, made the beds, scrubbed the floors, and, as the kitchen was the only sitting-room, I was, quite unwillingly, made an observer of her multifarious avocations. She even attended in the bar during the absence of her husband!

"We had our lodging in the second story of the house which, being unfinished and without partitions, is only one huge loft. A screen of blankets divided our corner from the other occupants of this extensive dormitory.

"I was very glad, you may well be assured, to find myself at last in my own house. After my week's experience at the hotel, it seemed a blessed refuge, it was a perfect palace! And yet it is only a small log house, which contained but one room, until the 'Doctor,' as I have learned to call Ralph, in aid of his professional dignity, nailed up a partition of boards, and thus divided my parlor, library, dining-room, and bed-room, (all in one,) from the kitchen.

"I have draped the walls of this room with the pretty chintz which Aunt Mary gave me, have hung up those beautiful engravings which were Uncle Lee's parting gift, my piano stands on one side, my work-table under the window, Ralph's library, and my own few but choice books, are arranged on a pretty set of swinging shelves, that have been manufactured by our joint ingenuity. There are white muslin curtains at the windows, rush matting on the rough floor, and at meal hours our little table, with its snowy cloth and two covers, stands awaiting the 'Doctor's' coming.

"And I get on famously in the kitchen, thanks to dear mamma's teachings. So far I have done everything very well, save the washing. Ralph tried, but quite in vain, to find some one to assist me, and so I was forced to do it myself.

"I got some soap of Mrs. Gage, at the hotel. She said it was 'kinder fiery,' but I did not at all comprehend her meaning, until, after half-an-hour's rubbing in the suds, I felt the intolerable smarting of my hands. The soap was full of ley, and when Ralph came home he found me suffering agonies with my poor bleeding, excoriated hands, which he was obliged to bandage up with emollients. He said, laughingly, that he hardly expected to find among his first patients one in his own house.

"One of our neighbor Dean's daughters came and finished my washing, when she heard about the condition of my hands. Poor girl! though she was without shoes, and very wretchedly clad, for her father is one of the haunters of the hotel stoop, and does little for the support of his family, she would receive nothing for her services. However, I find the family are bound to make up for their unwillingness to be paid for this kindness, by borrowing, and I shrewdly suspect that the borrowed articles will never be returned."

After a few more months, Amy wrote thus:

"Ralph's business increases daily, with the influx of emigration. New settlers are arriving constantly; another hotel is being built, and numbers of houses are going up all around us. As yet we find little congenial society, but, as we are by no means tired of each other, and have only too little leisure for our mutually delightful companionship, we do not complain of this.

"Our neighbors, the Deans, still resort to me for the loan of all imaginable articles. They are becoming exceedingly troublesome, but for Ralph's sake I try to conciliate even them; for it is necessary that he should have the good will and confidence even of the most ignorant of those who surround us. But thus far, in spite of all the toil and privation I have encountered, I find them my greatest trial.

"Just as I write in comes Mattie, striding over the threshold, with 'I didn't stop to knock, Mrs. Liston,' as if I were not aware of that unpleasant fact, throws her dirty sun-bonnet on my snow-white bed, and then sitting down by the piano, commences making horrible discord on the unoffending keys. After a little, as I keep on writing, and pay no attention to her, she gets up and comes looking over my shoulder. She has learned to read and write, and is very proud of the knowledge, so she makes her presence at my back known to me by the remark, 'Writing to your mother, hey, Mrs. Liston? I should think it would cost you a heap for postage on all them letters that you send off.'

"Then, unheeding my glance of anger and surprise, she adds, with an unconsciousness of giving offence that would be ludicrous were it not so provoking, 'Our Sally is going to the ball to-night, to the tavern, and mother told me I might get your hair-brush and combs, so's to fix up her hair nice.'

"Now as the said Sally rejoices in a shock of coarse, wiry, red hair, which, for some unknown purpose, she keeps always saturated with grease that sends forth an odor by no means so pleasant as the perfumes of 'Araby the Blest,' I felt myself justified in refusing to let Martha 'get' my brush and combs. Whereat that young lady departed in high dudgeon.

"Ralph has just been in, and seeing me discomposed, has teased the story of Martha's latest attempt at borrowing from me. And he says, 'Give her the things, Amy, and I will get you another set at the store this afternoon.' But, as these articles were part of my bridal outfit, I retort upon him, that if we must furnish the toilet of Miss Sally Dean, perhaps it would be quite as well to send *her* the articles from the village store."

Some years after Amy wrote thus, at the close of a season of deep affliction:

"Ralph is safe, at last, mother. For weeks, ever since that terrible fever, which has almost decimated our village, seized him, I have watched by his bedside in almost sleepless anxiety. Never, till now, have I known how my good and noble husband has been, during these toilsome years, training round him the affection of the uncultured, but kindly people, among whom our lot has been cast. But in this day of bitter trial we have reaped abundantly the harvest of his good deeds.

"How else could I have borne all? First, Ralph came home, deathly pale and ill, from our neighbor Dean's dying bed. The whole family, save the youngest girl, Jane, were prostrate, and he had spent much time with them. I think he took the fever there, but that does not matter, as I see now he could hardly have escaped it, so constantly was he exposed.

"On the third day of his illness little Alice was attacked. Till then Ralph had retained his reason, but he had barely time to tell me, in his feeble tones, what was necessary to be done for the child, when he became delirious. All night I vibrated between the bed and the crib, where lay the two darling objects of my care. In the morning, those of my neighbors who heard of the sickness of the 'Doctor' and our little girl, and who were well, or could be spared by the sick in their own homes, flocked in with offers of assistance.

"All my work in the kitchen has been silently accomplished, by willing hands, and kind women have, more than once, relieved my weary vigil and allowed me to catch the brief slumber that alone kept me from utter exhaustion.

"Now, thanks be to God, both husband and child are rapidly convalescing. My heart overflows with gratitude to Him who has brought them safely through this fearful illness, and only less to those kind neighbors, who have been to me instead of kindred and familiar friends in this day of trial. Never again shall I despise their uncultured minds or uncouth manners. Their true worth is better far than any superficial polish of education or conventionalism."

Again Amy wrote:

"The new railroad has made our little city suddenly a great emporium. We are no longer isolated and remote from the great world. We are near markets, and find sale for our commodities. We are growing rich, and take on airs!

"Our pretty cottage, the very prettiest house in town when we first occupied it, and still so, in my estimation, is quite overshadowed by the pretentious brick dwellings that are fast lining our thoroughfares, City modes of building have been imported with city manners. Brown stone fronts, story piled above story skyward, plate-glass, and carved doors, stand where, on my first arrival here, stood log cabins amidst green fields where cows and swine were feeding. The change is marvelous, but not more magical than that which is being wrought all over this great, growing, bustling West. Ralph shares in the general prosperity, and is fast becoming a rich man, as I am glad to tell you, because he is not at all spoiled, but is the same dear, excellent Ralph, to whom you gave your Amy fifteen happy years ago."

Five years later Amy wrote again in this wise, and with this letter we close our chronicle of Western experience:

"Two years since I wrote you, dear mother, that Ralph's practice had increased so greatly that he was forced to take a partner to divide with him the incessant toil.

"Dr. Hubbell is a young man, a devoted lover of his profession, a man deeply versed in scientific knowledge, and with a character for integrity and worth, such as any one might cherish with pride. My husband liked him much from the first. A strong attraction was manifest between them from their earliest meeting, and when Ralph proposed that he should become an inmate of our house, I could not object to what I saw would give him so much happiness.

"I found that I was amply repaid for my increased trouble, by my husband's evident enjoyment of Dr. Hubbell's society, as well as by the interest I took in this excellent man. He had been with us some months when Alice returned from the school at the East. I trust I have never done anything to gain the character of a 'manœuvering mamma,' but Ralph and I had often agreed that nothing would give us greater happiness than to see our child the wife of our beloved friend, Dr. Hubbell. And I placed no obstacle in the way when I discovered, very soon after Alice's return, that the two were mutually and strongly attracted to each other.

"How could it be otherwise with two such pure, gentle, loving natures, brought together, as they were, within the influence of a harmonious home like ours?

"Ralph and I watched with intense interest the budding and blossoming of this beautiful attachment. The doctor's diffidence and distrust of himself, the natural humility of an absorbing love, and the sweet shyness of our dear child, were pleasant to behold. We looked on in silence, content to let the lovers bide their time, and quite secure in the result. And we renewed our own youth, once more, as we saw this pretty love-poem unfolding itself under our eyes, and we remembered the sweet hopes and intense joys of our own early bloom of love. We are lovers still, after all these years, each of which has been but a golden link in the bright chain that binds our united lives.

"We were not mistaken in our prognostications. Yesterday Dr. Hubbell led our blushing Alice to us, as we sat together in the library, and the two, so beautiful and noble, knelt beside us, and craved our blessing on their love.

"Ralph joined their hands in his own, and then laid mine with his upon their heads in alternate benediction. Truly we were made happy in our children, and there seems no added boon that we would crave. Our cup of joy and content is full in witnessing the quiet happiness of Alice, and in bestowing her on one so worthy, even of our precious child.

"When the wedding is over, and the newly-married pair are settled quietly in their home, Ralph and I will go to Washington for the winter, and on the way will once more revisit our early home. I forgot to tell you that Ralph has been elected to Congress. No honor could add anything to the almost perfect character of my excellent husband; but as a mark of the esteem in which he is held by all parties, who have united in electing him to this position, as the champion of a great cause which draws them into temporary harmony, I am inexpressibly gratified by it. It shows me how much Ralph has earned of gratitude and esteem from the people among whom his best days have been so usefully and laboriously spent, and gives me a fresh motive for striving worthily to fulfill the destiny that made me his wife."

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THE TURN OF LIFE.

From the age of forty to that of sixty, a man who has properly regulated himself may be considered as in the prime of life. His matured strength of constitution renders him almost impervious to the attacks of disease, and experience has given his mind the soundness of almost infallibility. His mind is resolute, firm, and equal: all his functions are in the highest order. He assumes the mastery over business; builds up a competence on the foundation he has formed in early manhood, and passes through a period of life attended by many gratifications. Having gone a year or two past sixty, he arrives at a critical period in the road of existence: the river of death flows before him, and he remains at a stand-still. But athwart this river is a viaduct, called "The Turn of Life," which, if crossed in safety, leads to the valley "Old Age," round which the river winds, and then flows beyond without a boat or causeway to effect its passage. The bridge is, however, constructed of fragile materials, and it depends upon how it is trodden whether it bend or break. Gout, apoplexy, and other bad characters, are also in the vicinity to waylay the traveler, and thrust him from the pass; but let him gird up his loins, and provide himself with a fitting staff, and he may trudge on in safety with perfect composure. To quit a metaphor, the "Turn of Life" is a turn either into a prolonged walk or into the grave. The system and power having reached their utmost expansion, now begin either to close like flowers at sunset, or break down at once. One injudicious stimulant—a single fatal excitement—may force it beyond its strength; whilst a careful supply of props, and the withdrawal of all that tends to force a plant, will sustain it in beauty and in vigor until night has entirely set.

WHITHER.

BY ALICE CARY.

All the time my soul is calling,
  "Whither, whither do I go?"
For my days like leaves are falling
  From my tree of life below.

Who will come and be my lover!
  Who is strong enough to save,
Now that I am leaning over
  The dark silence of the grave?

Who will linger to environ
  With a smile that awful place—
Leaving 'neath the lid of iron
  Tender kisses on my face!

Wherefore should my soul be calling,
  "Whither, whither do I go?"
For my days like leaves are falling
  In the hand of God, I know.

As the seasons touch their ending,
  As the dim years fade and flee,
Let me rather still be sending
  Some good deed to plead for me.

Then, though none should stay to weep me,
  Lover-like, within the shade,
He will hold me, He will keep me,
  And I will not be afraid,

Even that dread time that's coming,
  But will hide me in His power,
And death find my heart there, humming
  Like a bee within a flower.

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A MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

While stopping in Florence, at the *Casa del Bello*, my companion and guide was James L. Grover, an American painter of some note, whom I had known well in the land of our nativity. It was Sunday evening, and on the following day I was to start for Bologna. Grover and myself sat upon one of the balconies of our chamber, engaged in conversation over our cigars, and after we had talked awhile of the various things we had seen during the day, he asked me if he had ever told me of his adventure upon the Appenines. I told him I had never heard it.

"Then I must tell it to you," he said, throwing away his cigar and taking a sip of wine.

I lighted a fresh cigar, and he related to me as follows:—

"Four years ago this summer my brother and two sisters visited me here in Florence. They spent two weeks with me, and then started for Venice, by the way of Bologna, where they had friends whom they were anxious to see. I should have gone with them had I not been engaged upon a work which I had promised to have done within a given time; but, as it was, we made the thing work very well, for my brother expected two thousand dollars by the hands of a friend who was shortly expected from Rome, and it was arranged that I should take the money when it came, and bring it with me to Venice when I got ready to meet them there. My brother left the necessary document for the obtaining of the money, and in due time set out.

"On the very next day I was taken sick, and was confined to my bed a week, but I got out and finished my work just as the friend arrived from Rome with the money. He delivered it into my hands upon the production of my brother's written instructions, and I set the next Monday as the day on which I would start. I was not really fit to undertake such a journey, but I could not miss seeing my sisters once more before they returned home. I could have sent the money easily enough, but I had promised myself too much pleasure with my dear relatives in Venice to miss it now.

"Monday morning came, and I could not arise from my bed without assistance. A sort of neuralgic affection had seized all my nerves, and I was forced to stay in doors, and resort to hot baths and medicine. But on the following morning I felt able to start, and I did so. Upon reaching Pistoja I learned that there was no diligence to leave before the next day. I could not stand this. I was already behind my time, and, if the thing could be accomplished, I must go on. There was a diligence under the shed, but no one to drive it. 'But can't we hire some one?' I asked. 'If signor will pay,' was the laconic reply. Of course I would pay; and though the sum charged was a round one, yet I did not hesitate. The lumbering vehicle was dragged out; four miserable-looking horses were attached, and then a yoke of stout oxen hitched on ahead of them. Two rough-looking fellows were provided, one as a *vetturino* (postillion), and the other to drive the oxen. Thus provided, I took my seat, and the diligence started.

"We were to cross the Appenines by the Pass of *La Collina*, and had just begun to ascend the rugged mountain path when I heard a loud halloing behind, and in a moment the diligence stopped.

"'What's the matter?' I asked, poking my head out through the opening by my side.

"'Two men want to ride,' returned the vetturino.

"'But I have hired the diligence, and am in a hurry; so drive on. If they wish to ride they must wait until to-morrow.'

"But the drivers were not to be governed thus.

"'It won't make a bit of difference,' they said. 'We'll go just as fast; and, beside, they'll pay us something.'

"By this time the cause of all the trouble made its appearance in the shape of two dark-visaged, black-bearded, powerful men, who looked ugly enough for the incarnation of Murder. I recognized one of them as a fellow whom I had seen hanging around the hotel at Florence, and the other I was confident I had caught a glimpse of just as the diligence left the yard at Pistoja.

"I was upon the point of speaking when the thought occurred to me that I had better keep my knowledge of the Italian language to myself. I might find out the character of the fellows thus. I knew very well that further remonstrance would be useless, for the drivers were stupidly hoggish, and the new applicants were surely not men to be argued with. The door was opened, and the fellows entered. I occupied the back seat, and they took the seat at the other end, fixing themselves so as to face me. They looked at me out of wicked eyes, and as they threw back their short cloaks I saw that they were well armed.

"'Hope we don't trouble you,' said one of them, in coarse Italian, as the diligence started on.

"I gazed inquiringly into his face, but made no reply.

"He repeated the remark.

"'No comprehend, signor,' I said, shaking my head.

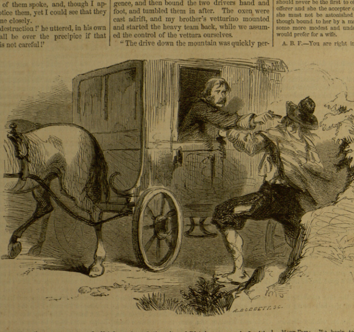
"'Ah—English,' he suggested, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"'No. American,' I told him.

"'Ugh,' he grunted, with another shrug of the broad, massive shoulders, and an awful scowl of the face.

"We had now begun to ascend the mountain in good earnest, and our pace was slow and lumbering. The fellow who drove the oxen made noise enough for an army, while the blows upon both oxen and horses fell hard and thick, but without accomplishing anything. Had I been alone I might have enjoyed the magnificent scenery which unfolded itself below us as we crept up the Collina; but as it was I could not think of anything save the two men who had forced themselves upon me. Pretty soon one of them spoke, and, though I appeared not to notice them, yet I could see that they were watching me closely.

"'Death and destruction!' he uttered, in his own tongue, 'we shall be over the precipice if that drunken driver is not careful!'



"I read the fellow's purpose in a moment, and not a movement betrayed my understanding of what he had said. My eyes were half closed, and, to all appearance, I was unconscious even of their presence.

"'He's right. He don't understand us,' said one of them.

"'All safe,' returned the other.

"After this they conversed together quite freely, and I was not long in having my worst fears realized. But not a change could they detect in my countenance. I kept my knowledge as secret as the very grave, and all my feeling was within me. After awhile they became satisfied that I knew nothing of their language, and they became more bold in their speech, and talked their plan all over; and from them I learned the following highly interesting particulars:

"The one whom I had seen in Florence had by some means learned that I was to carry quite a large sum of money with me across the mountains, and he had come on to Pistoja, where his confederate was, to await my arrival, intending to rob me there, if possible. But when they found that I was to go alone in the diligence, they had a better plan. They would rob me on the mountain. The two drivers were friends of theirs, and were to be paid liberally for allowing themselves to be overcome. The villains talked about cutting my throat, shooting me through the head, or plunging a knife to my heart, and then throwing me over the precipice, as coolly as though they had been planning the death of a fowl for dinner! The place where they were going to murder me was about a mile distant, where the road wound around a high crag, with an almost perpendicular wall of rock upon one hand, and a deep chasm upon the other.

"This was an interesting position, sure enough. I was weak—weak at best—but doubly weak now with my sickness—and the only weapon I had was a single pistol. Either of the brigands could have thrown me over his head with ease, and as for fighting with them, that was out of the question. What could I do? Both the drivers were in league with them. If I leaped from the diligence, I should die on the spot where I landed. If I shot one of the bandits, the other would annihilate me in a moment. I had the gold in a small traveling-bag under my feet, and as the heavy carriage jounced over the stones, the yellow pieces jingled sharply, and I could see the eyes of the villains sparkle like stars.

"At length the high, craggy peak was in sight, and I could see where the road wound abruptly about it. Thus far I had been torturing my brains to invent some way of escape, but without effect. I was as thoroughly hedged in as though bound by iron chains. And in a few minutes more all would be over! Still I felt for my pistol, and had it ready.

"Presently the diligence stopped at the foot of an abrupt rise, and the fellow who drove the oxen came and told the bandits they must get out and walk up. They stepped out at once, and in a moment more I heard a slight scuffle. I looked out just in time to see both the drivers lashed together by the arms, back-to-back. They must have been already placed for the operation, for the thing had been done with incredible quickness. I drew my pistol and awaited the result. My heart was in my mouth, but the intense excitement rendered me strong for the while.

"In a few seconds one of the villains came and poked the muzzle of a huge pistol into my face.

"'*Gold! Gold!*' he said. 'Give me gold, or die!'

"It was but the work of a second to knock his weapon down with my left hand, while with my right I brought up my own pistol and fired. The ball entered between his eyes, and he reeled back and fell. Then I leaped after him, for I saw his companion coming up upon the other side. I hoped to gain the dead man's pistol, but ere I could do so, the heavy hand of the living bandit was upon my shoulder, and his pistol aimed at my head. With the energy which the presence of death can alone beget, I knocked his weapon down and grappled with him. He hurled me to the ground as though I had been a child; but before he could follow up his advantage, the postillion cried out—

"'Hold, Marco! A vettura is coming!'

"The robber turned, and in a moment more a heavy vettura, with four horses attached, came around the bluff, full upon us. I started to my feet, and saw my brother looking from the open window!

"'Help! Robbers!' I shouted, with all my might.

"The bandit had taken aim at the vetturino of the new team, but he was too late. My brother had comprehended the whole truth in a moment, and with a sure aim, and a quick one, too, he shot the villain through the heart.

"We secured my two drivers, and then matters were quickly explained. I told my brother all that had happened, and he then told me that he had heard of my sickness, and was coming back to see me. One of my sisters had been sick at Bologna, so they had not yet gone to Venice, but were waiting until I should be able to join them. You can imagine how deep our gratitude was, and how fervently we blessed God for this fortunate interposition. My joy seemed to lift me up from the pain I had suffered, and I felt better than I had before felt for weeks.

"And now, what should we do next? Should we let the two rascally drivers go, and turn about for Bologna?

"'No,' said my brother. 'Our sisters won't expect us for three days, so we'll carry these villains back and give them up, and to-morrow we'll go over in my vettura.'

"We tumbled the two dead bodies into the diligence, and then bound the two drivers hand and foot, and tumbled them in after. The oxen were cast adrift, and my brother's vetturino mounted and started the heavy team back, while we assumed the control of the vettura ourselves.

"The drive down the mountain was quickly performed, and the city of Pistoja was reached without mishap. The two dead men were recognized as old offenders at once, and my testimony very quickly settled the business for the drivers. On the next night we were in Bologna, where my sisters received me with open arms, and two days afterwards we were all in Venice.

"So much for my trip across the Appenines. And let me say to you—If you have ever an occasion to hire a special diligence, with strange drivers, to ride over the mountains of Italy, be sure that you are well armed, and have a trusty friend with you if possible."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

☞ *All the back numbers of the* Ledger, *from June 7th*, 1856, *up to the present date, can be had at our office, in quantities or by the single copy.*

Lady Boothroyd.—This correspondent says she is a "young lady;" that she boards in a family where there is a young married couple, with whom she has been on the most friendly terms; that the husband constituting one half of this "young married couple" seems to think as much of her as he does of his wife, and often lays his head in her (our correspondent's) lap, of an evening, while his wife is present, but that of late the wife does not seem to like her as well as she did formerly; and "Lady Boothroyd" innocently asks "what we think the reason for the wife's coldness is, for, for the life of her, *she* can't imagine!" Our correspondent is either a very bad-hearted or a very soft-headed woman. In the first place, she exhibits a lack of delicacy in permitting the husband of another "to lie with his head in her lap, of an evening, while his wife is present"—or, for that matter, while she is absent, either. A man who would do such a thing must be a vulgar, ill-bred vagabond, and a woman who encourages him in doing it is highly immodest, and quite lacking in kindness and consideration for the wife who is thus publicly insulted. If our correspondent will abandon the practice of holding this ill-mannered husband's head in her lap while his wife is present, or while she is absent, the latter will probably cease to treat her with coldness, though it is not to be expected that the entire effect of such highly improper conduct can be soon overcome or forgotten.

Isabel.—You treated the matter excellently well. As for the little dispute about "the true meaning and the proper use of the word *virtue*," we hardly know what to say. You are all right in one sense, and all wrong in another. The trouble is, you do not take a sufficiently extended view of the term, but strive to limit its significance to certain common acceptations. The primary meaning of virtue is *strength*, and hence *worth, excellence*. It means many things, according to the qualities to which it is applied, as it simply signifies *the best of the kind or class*, or, *the best thing under the circumstances*. Thus the virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, etc. It also means moral goodness, chastity, courage, etc.

Mamma.—Five hours a day is too long for your children, or anybody's children, to be kept in school. Three hours a day should be the extent of their confinement in school before they are fifteen years old, and the limit to their play in the open air should only be their capacity and desire for outdoor exercise. The boy or girl that goes to school until fifteen years old three hours a day, and plays and works six, will be a wiser, better, healthier and happier human being than the boy or girl who for the same time goes to school six hours a day, and plays and works only three.

Reuben.—We do not profess to be able to tell "when there will be no more evils in the world." It used to be an old saying, and it is still quoted in monarchical countries, that "the evils of the world will continue until philosophers become kings, or kings become philosophers." We are of opinion that before the evils of the world will be sensibly diminished, all the people, high and low, will have to become immaculately wise and good—pure-souled, meek-hearted Christians.

Theodore.—No wonder you have not made much progress in your classical studies, seeing that you have been pursuing them for only three years. To become a "superior classical scholar," you will have to work hard at your studies for ten or a dozen years at least. One of the best things you can learn is that it is necessary for him who would achieve excellence in any business, trade, profession or pursuit, to work long and wait patiently for the day of triumph to come.

Mourner.—A reasonable indulgence of grief at the loss of those near and dear to us is allowable, but it is reprehensible to grieve so vehemently and so long as to unfit us for the discharge of our duties towards the living. We celebrate nobler obsequies to those we love by drying the tears of others, than by shedding our own; and the fairest funeral wreath we can hang on their tomb is not so fair as a fruit-offering of good deeds.

O. S. W.—We hope you will be successful "in finding and enjoying the personal acquaintance of the greatest fool in New York." Of course there is such a being somewhere "in our midst," and someone has undoubtedly had the pleasure of standing face to face with him this very day. We suspect he is the man who came to our office to get a copy of the Ledger a day in advance of its issue, and said he thought we would let him have it if he would pay double price for it.

Freeman.—We do not know "what man is the greatest teacher in America." Perhaps the best teacher in America is a woman. On general principles we should say that the "best teacher" is the one that enables his or her pupils to obtain the greatest amount of knowledge with the least consumption of time and energy.

Haidee.—You should not take the coolness of your lover in regard to your efforts to please him so much to heart. You say he is apt to be very severe and censorious: in that case his silence should be construed as praise; just as the silence of a person who loves to praise is considered censure.

B. M.—You were not so much to blame as your antagonist, but you were somewhat in the wrong, inasmuch as you did not at once cut his acquaintance on his making an ungentlemanly threat.

X. Y. Z.—According to your statement, your enemy was guilty of falsehood, although he said not a word. There are lying looks as well as lying words, dissembling smiles, deceiving signs, and even a lying silence.

Esther and Julia.—There are many good daguerrian galleries in this city, any of which would, for a fair compensation, "take your likenesses." We do not wish to say which of them is the best.

Lily Auderly.—You are making a fatal mistake in lavishing so much attention and so many caresses upon your lover. Not one man in a hundred can stand such treatment. Nature has decreed that the male shall be the wooer and do all the love-making, and this decree cannot be disobeyed without disaster, except in rare cases. A girl who is constantly kissing her lover voluntarily, and fondling him unasked, will not be apt to retain his love. Such conduct will affect his affection as an overdose of honey would his stomach. Besides, it is undignified and verging on immodesty. She should never be the first to offer a caress; *he* should be the offerer and she the accepter of such delicacies. Otherwise, she must not be astonished to discover that her lover, although bound to her by a marriage engagement, has found some more modest and undemonstrative maiden whom he would prefer for a wife.

A. B. F.—You are right in saying that John C. Calhoun was not the originator of the phrase "a masterly inactivity." It was first used by Sir James Mackintosh, in a speech in the British Parliament, in the year 1791, who thus introduced it: "The Commons, faithful to their system, remained in a wise and masterly inactivity," etc.

Germanicus.—You could learn to read the German language, without the aid of a teacher, but not to speak it. The necessary books would not cost you over five dollars, and you could get enough to start with for two dollars.

Judson.—The property will have to be disposed of according to the will.

Godfrey Dulanie.—You had better write to the young lady at once, and tell her the whole story.

Mary Eliza.—We begin to have our doubts of the lion. From the proud position of "king of beasts" he seems descending to the level of a mere exaggerated cat. Dr. Livingstone, Gordon Cummings, Anderssohn, and others say he is a sneaking, pusillanimous creature, and is not able to contend with a good-sized buffalo. But we are not disposed to give up the lion so easily. We can not relinquish the admirable and terror-fraught stories we read of him in our youth, which, though in many cases "too good to be true," are also too good to yield up except on the most indubitable evidence of their falsity. Besides, "Girard the lion killer" is on our and the lion's side. He says the lions he had the pleasure of meeting and becoming acquainted with were terrible fellows; some of them as large as an ox, utterly devoid of fear, and of such prodigious strength that they could kill a full-sized bull at one blow of a paw or one snap of their teeth, and then carry his carcase off in their mouth as easily a cat would her kitten. He also says their prowes is so terrible that a dozen or twenty Bedouins, armed to the teeth, are easily overcome and killed by a single lion. Those are the lions we believe in. The truth probably is, that, in different latitudes, the lion developes different degrees of growth, strength and courage. Girard hunted lions in the most northern portions of Africa, and there the "king of beasts" probably reaches his grandest development.

Chesapeake wants to earn more money than he is now getting for his labor, and he asks if he had better come to our "noble city" for that purpose. We answer no—emphatically no. New York is the worst possible place for a young man to come to, and especially so for one "who has no particular choice as to what he does." To succeed in this city, a person must have excellence of some kind. A mere dabbler cannot succeed here in any business or profession. And when a young man says he "is ready to turn his hand to anything," he will find that employers in New-York will at once turn their backs upon him.

Troubadour.—According to your account of him, your son would not distinguish himself at the Military Academy at West Point. A boy who has lived an idle, self-indulgent, vagabond life until the age of fifteen, would not be able to stand the discipline of West Point. It might do him good, however, to be subjected to such discipline for a few months, though as he would be quite certain to be dismissed at an early period, it is questionable if the result of getting him appointed to a cadetship would on the whole be beneficial.

Patience.—We do not consider the works of Charlotte Bronte and her sisters as healthy, sound-toned books. Those unfortunate girls suffered too much in their youth, and became too morbid to write healthfully. Like all persons who have had such terrible experiences of life, they fill their writings with unnatural and distorted characters and sentiments. They were girls of very great talent, however, and wrote with a power rarely displayed by their sex.

Western New Yorker.—It would cost from one to three hundred dollars to go to Australia, according to the accommodations demanded. You had better stay at home and marry the "dear girl" you mention, than go to Australia, or any of the other gold-producing regions. The best way to get over the bashfulness you complain of is to get married, and you can save more money where you are than you could probably dig out of the earth.

Aunt Esther.—It is an exceedingly difficult thing to find a good book for a little girl eight years old, or for any child, outside of the productions of "Mother Goose" and her class. Juvenile books are generally either incomprehensible or silly. The best way would be to take the child to a book-store, place all kinds of juvenile books before her, and let her choose for herself.

Webster Village, Mass.—Some physicians contend that it is unwise for cousins to intermarry, as their offspring are more subject to physical and mental ailments and weakness than the offspring of persons not connected by consanguineous ties. Other authorities hold to a contrary theory; and we do not consider ourselves competent to decide between them.

Edward G.—We utterly disagree with you in regard to the matters under discussion. We cannot imagine what harm such books as "The House that Jack Built," "Goody Two-Shoes," "Little Red Ridinghood," and other similar publications can work to children. It strikes us that while you are straining so hard at this very small gnat you are in danger of swallowing some vicious camel.

A Wife of Five Years wants to know if it is not wrong for a husband *ever* to get out of temper with his wife! Yes, most undoubtedly; and yet there probably has never been a husband who has not sometime been out of temper not only with his wife, but with all the world, himself included. It cannot be expected that men should be much better than women.

N. D. W.—If you have not heard from your husband during his seven years' absence, and if you have reason to suppose him to be dead, you can marry again. Should your husband afterwards return, your second marriage would hold good until the Supreme Court of this State, after a full and fair hearing, declared it to be null and void You could could not be prosecuted for bigamy in any event.

Sweet Sixteen.—It would be wrong for you to marry a man you do not love, and whom you believe you never can love. It would probably wreck your happiness for life, and no one is called upon to make such a sacrifice. You must wait until you become of age, and then marry the man of your choice. Probably your parents would not oppose your wishes so long as five years.

J. G. K.—On meeting a company of ladies, but one of whom you know, if the lady you are acquainted with salutes you, return her salute and pay no attention to her companions. In the "first circles" it is customary for ladies and gentlemen to wear gloves at balls. In a place where this is not the custom, it would be better not to wear them, as it would look snobbish to the ungloved.

Truth Seeker.—You must be insane to think of "searching after the truth in Utah among the saintly Mormons." Your husband should keep a strict watch over you. The Mormons are a horrid set of people, one-half knaves and the other half fools; and the sooner you banish from your mind forever all thoughts of joining their ranks and going to Utah, the better it will be for you and your children.

A Public-School Boy, thirteen years of age, sends the following problem for his fellow juvenile readers of the Ledger to cipher out. There is a certain piece of work which A can do in twenty days, B in eighteen days, C in fourteen days, and D (who is a boy) in thirty days; in what time could they all complete the job by working together?

Joseph H.—It would be no more than a proper exhibition of gallantry and affection on your part to let your intended select the clergyman who is to perform the marriage ceremony. What difference does it make what sect he belongs to? All that you can ask is that the ceremony be pleasantly and legally performed.

Uncle.—You should cultivate your affections and all the better, finer and more amiable sentiments of the heart, and then you would not be so easily annoyed by your sister's children. Many men seem to cultivate a spirit of impatience with children, and suffer themselves to be annoyed and to get in a rage with them on very slight provocations, and, in fact, on mere imaginary ones. The man who does not love childhood, and who does not like children, and who is disliked by them, is a *failure*. He is a defective man. He should set diligently at work cultivating the barren soil of his nature, that, happily, it may bring forth generous fruits of feeling and sympathy, and be adorned with the beauteous flowers of affection. You had better commence playing morning and evening with your little nephews and nieces; help to undress them at night and to dress them in the morning; have them lisp their little prayers at your knee, and give you their "good-night" caress; think of them during the day, and carry home some little gift to them at its close; take an interest in their sports, their studies, and all their childish joys and sorrows, and you will ere long find it impossible for them to annoy you, and will derive a happiness from their society and love, richer than any you have ever won from any other source.

Quandary is in a quandary. He is engaged to an estimable young lady, whom he has supposed he loved until recently, but having seen another that has "taken possession of his whole being," he now finds that he does not, and in fact never has, *truly* loved the young lady to whom he is betrothed. And now comes the old question, "How can I *honorably* extricate myself from this dilemma?" You must state the case to the young lady whose affections you have won and abused, and let *her* take what course she pleases. She will probably at once release you from your engagement with her. But you must let her announce to her friends the breach of the engagement in her own way and in her own time, so the public shall first hear of it from her and her relatives and friends. It is a serious thing to a woman's reputation to have a marriage engagement broken off except by herself, and for a good cause. No man wishes to marry one who has sustained such intimate relations with another, and therefore you owe it to this "estimable young lady" to let her have her own way in the matter, and to take upon yourself, silently and forever, whatever of odium may result from the rupture of the engagement. Even then the other party will suffer enough, and all by *your* fault.

Lyacoming is a poor young man of twenty-one and he loves a poor girl. He is out of employment and cannot support a wife, and does not know when the time that he will be able to support one will come. He is very deeply in love, and is afraid some one else may "get the girl;" still he does not think it would be right for him to engage himself to her while there is no prospect of his being able to support her; and he wants advice. You had better tell the girl just what you have told us, and let her decide, with a full knowledge of the facts, whether or not you and she had better enter into a marriage engagement. Perhaps the consciousness that she would become your wife as soon as you should earn a home for her, would so stimulate you to exertion as to enable you soon to succeed.

Son of Albion.—Yes. A British soldier has to go wherever the British government chooses to send him. His wishes in such a matter, and his comfort, are never thought of. A British subject, though he should come to this country, be naturalized, and live here many years, he would, in time of war, on returning *voluntarily* into the dominions of the British crown, be subject to laws and regulations concerning its citizens, and our government would not interfere. Such a person could not be taken forcibly, and against his will, however, from an American ship, or from American territory, or, in fact, from anywhere, without being called to account by the government of the United States.

Inez.—Your statement is not explicit enough to enable us to say whether or not the doctor would have to refund the money you paid for the article. If he warranted it to be of a certain quality, or to possess certain qualities, and to work in a particular manner, so as to produce certain desired results, if you can prove that he so warranted it, and that it has essentially failed to come up to the warranty, you can recover your money back, if the person to whom you paid it is a responsible man.

Troubled.—This correspondent says he is in love with two girls, and has been keeping company with both, his duplicity being known only to himself. But now the time has come when he must make a final choice, and he fears that the one he "gives up" will make trouble. We suspect our correspondent is mistaken. As soon as the girls learn about his outrageous conduct, they will probably both dismiss him, and hand him over to the contempt of the community.

Executor.—You are evidently not prepared to cope with your antagonist. You mistake the means of proving your facts for the facts themselves, and speak of matters which are *conclusions of law* as though they were settled points. You should secure the services of some one who understands the management of such things.

Eleanor.—Your friend is treading on dangerous ground. The first thoughts of a woman in affairs of the heart should be the preservation of her own character. When a woman finds that her suitor is a married man, or engaged to another, she should parley no more with him; it only lowers her in his estimation and her own.

Pet.—We fear that you are an undutiful niece, and that your good old uncle is only too kind to you. If an old bachelor to others, he is a father to you, according to your own story. Respect his wishes and honor him while living, that you may be able to stand by his grave with an unaccusing conscience.

Richard Hoffman.—There would be no harm in your corresponding with your young feminine friend provided her parents are willing that you should do so. You ought also to state the case to your own parents. Boys never lose anything by treating their parents with the utmost possible respect and confidence.

Edwin B. H.—The back numbers of the Ledger for June 7th, 1856, to January 1st, 1858, would cost you $3 28; and the postage on them would cost forty-one cents more. A year's subscription to the Ledger is $2; so the whole cost of what you want would be $5 69.

P. M.—We do not personally know much about any of the "gift enterprises" of the day; we believe most of them to be downright swindles. It is a safe principle of action never to entrust money to anybody of whose responsibility you are not assured.

P. D. N.—You were served right. You should mind your own business, and not interfere with other peoples' affairs. It is an old adage that "he that blows the coals in quarrels he has nothing to do with, has no right to complain if the sparks fly in his face."

John Jones.—A gentleman who has escorted a lady to a party should wait for her to signify that she wishes to return home, unless his engagements or duties require him to return at some appointed time, and then he should tell her beforehand at what hour he would have to go.

Bion.—In the Ledger for March 14, 1857, which can be ordered through any newsdealer, you will find a full account of the means of getting a boy appointed to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, and everything connected with his duties.

George.—We believe there are neither anacondas nor boa constrictors (except such as are on exhibition) within the limits of the United States, though we have read accounts of pretty big snakes found in the Okefenoke swamp and the cane-brakes of the southwest.

Hope.—You should be careful how you make any, even the slightest, advances to a young man to whom you have never been introduced. Except in rare instances a young lady should not ask a gentleman to accompany her to a place of amusement.

Mifflin.—We should say that the omission on the part of the ladies to invite you and your friends to call again might be taken as a hint for you not to repeat your call, but you should judge of that by their manner towards you.

H. D. L.—There have been many attempts to invent flying machines and balloon ships, but we have never taken any interest in them, and can give you no information about them or their unsuccessful inventors.

R. A. H.—Call on the young lady without an introduction, state your case, and ask her permission to call again. She would consider your feelings towards her as a great compliment.

A Ladies' Man.—Though we detest what is called "a ladies' man," we will answer your question: You did right in not giving up your seat to the strange couple. It was your duty to remain with your own company.

Lizzie wants to know what the *a* in "Thomas a Becket" stands for. It is very much the same as the *O* in Daniel O'Connell, or the *de* in Emile de Girardin, &c. It means *of*, or the *descendant of*.

Rocky Mountains.—If you wish to promote your domestic happiness, you should at once "make up," as you express it, with your wife. This "standing out," and seeing who shall "speak first," is silly business.

Door-Keeper.—The duties of the door-keeper of the House of Representatives are not at all such as one would suppose them to be. The door-keeper is a sort of superintendent of the Hall, and has multifarious duties to perform.

J. D. L.—You can cure the skins of wild animals by stretching them out as much as possible, and drying them thoroughly.

A. B. D., Oskaloosa, Iowa.—The back numbers of the Ledger containing the story of "The Wild Knight; or, The Unknown Crusader," will cost you twenty cents.

Desdemona.—The prettiest girls are those who can afford to dress the cheapest. It is only plain girls that require ornaments, and splendid and costly dresses.

O. R.—We don't know what has become of the mathematical prodigy you mention.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*